Piloting The Sunday School

E. MORRIS FERGUSSON

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PILOTING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

BY E. MORRIS FERGUSSON, D.D

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A MESSAGE TO SUPERINTENDENTS

By
E. MORRIS FERGUSSON, D.D.
Author of "Church School Administration," "How to Run a Little Sunday School"; etc.

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PREFACE

EVERY Sunday-school superintendent today stands in need of the new education.

There is such an education. In the public-school world, for these many years, it has been coming in; and its advance was never swifter, surer or saner than it is today. Leaders of Sunday-school service, with a wide section of the rank and file, have accepted its principles and viewpoints and are busy embodying them in their work of teaching religion. In some cases, as befits teachers of religion, and as conditions have made possible, the Sunday schools have distanced the public schools in the application to curriculum and method of the modern view of educational truth. The superintendent has a right to know what this new education has for him.

The advance of weekday religious instruction has been so rapid and is so full of promise that we are in danger of thinking of the Sunday school as a mere item of salvage, hardly worth considering except as it may be built into a new community-wide system. Advocates of a broadened "church school," inter-relating all parish educational activities, are likewise in danger of counting the Sunday school as but one of a group of institutions

whose main use is to form part of a wider and worthier program.

More power to these much-needed reforms! But while they are coming, the work of the Sunday school goes on. The American children and youth who have nothing but the Sunday school to look to for their religious teaching still number many millions; and beyond them are millions more whose only hope is that more and larger and better Sunday schools will find them and draw them in.

If the present generation of children is to be saved through the teaching of Christ's religion, most of such teaching will be given them in the Sunday school. The plain, every-day superintendent, in nearly every case, will continue to be his own director of religious education. If there is anything in this new education that he can put into his work, he wants it. This book aims to meet him where he is and help him find the better way.

I have written these pages in spiritual fellowship with some hundreds of Sunday-school superintendents in many states, particularly in New Jersey, Maryland and Massachusetts, my fields of state Sunday-school association activity. The friendship and counsel of these men I have shared; their questions and problems have been my study; and to them as collaborators my thanks are due. To their successors of this later day, facing new problems but carrying with equal heroism the same old load, I offer through this book some such modest and incidental aid as I sought to give to

their predecessors, in my quarter-century of convention service.

Many of these chapters have already, in substance, appeared in certain denominational journals; but all have been carefully rewritten, and some are new.

E. M. F.

Newtonville, Mass.

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I

CHANNEL LIGHTS

THE Sunday-school superintendent is, or he should be, the pilot of his school. The pilot is responsible for knowing the channel and for keeping the vessel in deep water till it reaches the ocean or makes its port.

It is fine to know the whole field of Sunday-school administrative science. A superintendent who will study this in detail will find his labour well worth while. But if that cannot be, it is at least good to know how to steer. The pilot makes no pretense of knowing the whole harbour bottom: but he does know where the ship should go, and how to keep it going on its safe and proper course.

There is a way to steer a Sunday school. It is very like the way by which, on a broad and shallow bay or river, the pilot manages to keep the ship he is guiding always in the navigable channel. How he does this is quite a mystery to the landsman; but once we have the explanation, it is simple enough. And as an illustration it has for any such educational leader as a Sunday-school superintendent a peculiar value.

In any land-locked water, the steersman by day or night makes for some point on the shore. So may the superintendent properly select some excellence or achievement that seems to him just now

to be of greatest importance, and keep the attention of all his company fixed on that as the main goal of endeavour. It is necessary to select the goal wisely; but it is still more necessary, when the goal has once been selected, to make for it in a straight, unswerving line.

The Sunday schools that have become famous have had for their superintendents men who knew how to pick goals and then steer for them. Week after week, quarter after quarter, some particular habit, observance or virtue has been magnified and every teacher and pupil stimulated to join in the effort for success along that line. With a leader who never scolds, who is quick to commend every success, who gives full credit for all cooperation, who never doubts that next time we shall surely win, and whose attention is not distracted to any other steering-point, success comes soon.

But this oneness of purpose has its limitation. After all, there is no such thing as perfection; and there are other goals besides that for which we are now steering. The pilot who steers for one point too long will run aground. He must know just when to turn, pick up another point and steer for that. So has many a Sunday school been run aground by a leader who kept on insisting on punctuality, or Bibles brought to school, or some other hobby, until the campaign lost all power to inspire and became either a grind or a joke. While pursuing one goal, therefore, the wise leader will fix on another; and he will stand ready to swing his boat's head that way just when the time to put about has come.

But how shall he know just when that time is? The answer to that question gives us the solution to the landsman's mystery.

In a properly marked channel the pilot is shown exactly where to steer and when to turn. For every steering-point there is a lighthouse, conspicuous by day, shining steadily at night, and planted on or very near the edge of the water. Some distance behind this stands another just like it, usually on a higher elevation. The line formed by the two lights is the line down which the pilot is to steer. He brings his ship to where he can see the two lights in line, one above or behind the other. He steers down that line, watching for other lights on the side toward which he knows he must turn. Soon he sees them. They steadily draw together. The point from which both pairs of lights can be seen in line is the turning-point of the channel. Reaching this, the boat forsakes the old line and starts down the new one; and so she proceeds till she reaches open water or rounds to at the wharf.

Something like this method is available to the superintendent. The literature of Sunday-school administration is extensive. Some of it is simple, practical and immediate, like the channel lights planted near the shore. Wherever the inquiring superintendent can catch sight of a point of excellence lacking in his school, as he scans these practical suggestions, there is a good point toward which to steer.

But back of all good practice is good theory. For every point of the practical standard there is

some sound educational principle that determines this as a good thing to do. If the superintendent can see the underlying principle as well as the immediate steering-point, he can navigate his vessel more wisely; because he can then determine the true line along which educational progress is possible.

The Sunday-school navigator, then, needs a second light beyond and above his first one. It is right that he should make for the common-sense, practical result whose value any wise man can see. It is also right that he should understand, as a trained teacher can understand, why such a result is desirable and what success along that line will mean. Let him therefore look for the far lights as well as for the near ones. There are books and lines of study that will bring these far lights clearly into view. Some of them are presented in the pages that follow. The navigator of the Sunday school must find his channel lights!

With both near and far lights visible, it is not hard to see when to turn from one desirable steering-point to another. The navigator is now master of his chart of the channel. He knows what his school is for, what spiritual results his methods are intended to foster, and by what laws of child-nature he must run his organization in order to bring his educational ship safely to port. He knows where to look for the next pair of channel lights, and how to use them. Practice and theory, wisely combined, will enable even an inexperienced leader to make a success of his administration.

This book is offered as an aid to the practical

superintendent of the average Sunday school who wants to make his work in the highest sense successful. In some of the chapters the figure of the channel lights is used to show the relation between ordinary Sunday-school practice and efforts based on sound educational science. Other chapters take up some one feature of Sunday-school excellence and consider it in itself. The book is not for those leisurely yachtsmen who sail their Sunday-school craft for the pleasure of going, but for the earnest captains who realize the immortal worth of the lives whose destiny they help to determine, and who are resolved, with the heavenly Pilot's guidance and blessing, to bring their precious freightage safe into port.

II

INCREASED ATTENDANCE

EVERY red-blooded superintendent wants to make his Sunday school the expression of his own capability. Through it he must show to its members, his church and the world around him that he is able to do this work and to do it well. In business, or whatever his calling may be, he has succeeded; and because of this success the church has given its Sunday school into his keeping. He is determined to show that in so doing they have made no mistake. They shall find him a success at this business also!

The business-man superintendent therefore seeks for a simple ratio of Sunday-school success. In business this is found in volume of trade. The corresponding Sunday-school ratio is the number of members enrolled and attending. How do these figures for this year compare with last year's figures, or with the record made three years ago?

On increase of attendance, accordingly, the superintendent habitually fixes his eye. More sales, good salesman: bigger school, good superintendent. Why not? If the school's statistics show a steady climb from year to year, surely that proves that this man knows how to run a Sunday school.

Let us then think of favourable statistics as a

lighthouse, the first and most conspicuous for which the Sunday-school pilot is to steer. In counting increase of numbers as a gain, and as one mark of successful leadership, the superintendent is not mistaken. As long as any unreached are left to be striven for, increase is gain, and the pursuit of increase is a duty.

Having sighted this point, the ambitious and energetic superintendent proceeds, as is proper, to make for it in a straight line. All hands are enlisted in a common endeavour after larger numbers and a steadier attendance. The day's report is regularly presented by the secretary, in such form as to stimulate desire for a better record next Sunday. "Star classes" are given recognition. By the use of some pictorial advice, continued from week to week, the school's attention is kept fixed on its numerical progress; and the bringing in of new members is presented as a project in which all have a common concern.

Both halves of this work are thoroughly worth while. It is important to keep after the unreached, the uninterested, and the former pupils who have ceased to attend. It is even more important to secure the regular attendance of those enrolled now. There are, to be sure, cautions and limits to be borne in mind, as rocks and sand-bars lying close to the channel. Not every much-used or loudly advertised device is educationally wise. But there is a safe channel, if we know how to keep it; and down that steering-line our ship ought to go.

The fact is, we do not always, as Sunday schools,

take our own lessons seriously. I once heard B. F. Jacobs of Chicago tell this story of what happened in his own Immanuel Baptist Sunday school, soon after a lesson on Christ's parable of the Marriage Feast. They had one boy who was so troublesome that his teacher and the superintendent were forced to consider what to do with him. "Let me be a teacher," the boy said; "I'll get a class of my own." It was before the days of diversified activities: being a teacher was about all the real, adventurous work that school had to do. They wisely accepted the challenge. Next Sunday in marched the boy, at the head of a motley crew. When asked how he had got them, his answer was, "I highwayed an' hedged 'em!" That boy had learned the lesson of the parable, whether the Sunday school had or not.

Within reach of most Sunday schools there is considerable material waiting to be "highwayed and hedged"; and there is probably also in the school a boy or girl of latent leadership power, who will accept the task of going after and getting this material on satisfactory assurance that the labourer will be deemed worthy of his hire, and will receive, as did the Chicago boy, not a mere verbal recognition, or a book or other thing of supposed value, but the practical acknowledgment of his leadership capacity. A superintendent of organizing ability can set up a membership campaign that will both bring in new members, reclaim waifs and strays, tone up the attendance of the regulars, and be a valuable project in the Christian education of the whole school.

To measure trade by its volume, however, and the Sunday school by its numbers, is crude procedure, as any business man can easily see. External changes, in the population or the habits of the community, may in either case make it impossible for any leader so much as to hold his own. We are willing enough to employ the test while things are coming our way; but when the tide is ebbing away from us we protest its injustice. To use the test at all is not fair to some good men; and some day it may be our turn to say so.

Large trade, also, does not always mean satisfactory service or a healthy business condition. Neither does an overflowing Sunday school always mean a built-up church and a satisfied people. There must be profits as well as sales. In the hearts and the neighbour-to-neighbour talk of the customers there must be a constant sense of gratitude for service rendered and of satisfaction with goods bought and treatment accorded. In the same way the Sunday school must teach its lessons as well as gather its recruits. The superintendent dare not rest his claim to success on numbers: he is bound to stand judgment also on the quality of the work his school is doing.

But even where the leader is satisfied both with his numbers and with his teaching work, numbers tell little until we deal with the individual records. Not until it can be seen how the school is doing member by member may it be said that the leadership is numerically a success. And not until the school takes cognizance of those outside as well as of those inside its membership can that mem-

bership be appraised at its proper numerical worth.

Educational science today includes the department of child accounting. As applied to the Sunday school it sets up, beyond the shore light of increased attendance, the farther light of a full and complete discharge of responsibility for every member of the Sunday school's constituency. It is not content to rejoice that we have a hundred and ten members today, whereas we had but a hundred a year ago. It wants to know how many of that hundred are now in the hundred and ten, and what has become of the rest. It also wants to know how many of the school's proper constituents are still outside the hundred and ten, who and where they are, and how soon they can be added to the ranks and suitably provided for.

So the Sunday-school navigator who on lines of membership increase would be rated a success by the modern experts as well as by the old-line workers must fix his eye not only on the near light of absolute increase but also on the far light of a constituency fully accounted for. Taken together, the two goals give him a perfectly definite line on which to steer. He will find himself facing additional hard work, full organization, an increased budget, the bringing out of unused efficiency, especially among the young folks, and a faithful study of approved methods. In all competitive fields this broader project will also mean the cultivating of friendly relations with the adjoining churches and a considerable amount of cooperative endeavour. But the goal is not beyond reach. It is

within reach of any church whose leader is able to see it clearly and who succeeds in enlisting his whole force in a determined and continued effort to make it their own.

How profits are figured in a big business is a mystery to the untrained outsider. With all these unsold goods on the shelves, how can the firm possibly know where it stands? The secret is in the inventory. Stock-taking is a trying and often a puzzling job. Sometimes the doors have to be closed in order to permit the clerks to finish it. But it has to be done, and the merchant does it. He thus gets a figure, which he can add to other items of assets and so see to a dollar how he has fared. The Sunday school needs to bring this element of the inventory into its membership plans.

The true beginning of the Sunday school's personal accounting system is not its membership roll, nor yet its percentage of membership in regular attendance. It is the inventory of men, women and children for whom it is responsible. To find this, it may make an estimate; or it may draw the lines of a parish and figure its constituents, outside and in; or it may send out canvassers to skirmish on the church's account; or, best of all, it may start or join a general community house-to-house canvass, and plan to repeat it at regular intervals every one, two or three years. In some way, accurately if we can, approximately if we must, we should know the statistics of that Sunday school that this Sunday school would be if every one of its proper membership were on its roll.

At the same time, for those now on the roll, the

school must so improve its methods of recording attendance and class and department work that it can keep track of each pupil for the full period of his stay in the school, and can follow him when he leaves. Nothing short of this is satisfactory record-keeping. Weekly, quarterly and annually, the secretary's report should lay at least as much stress on continuances and advances up the grades and promotions to higher positions as on the influx of new members; and as to these last it should from time to time indicate how many eligible to the respective departments are still outside.

The purposeful project, undertaken by a group and carried under wise leadership to a successful and satisfying conclusion, forms one of the standard modes of modern education. Such projects may well be attacked by classes and departments, in ways and fields suited to their differing years. But the true numerical advance of the whole Sunday school, first through steadier attendance and then through the hearty, united and unselfish invitation service of the members, each in his own place and way, may be made a permanent school-wide project in missionary education, with results recorded not only in creditable statistics and the recruiting of useful workers, but in friendships, loyalties, capacities, and dedications to wider service in the name of Christ.

III

GOOD ORDER

TO have the Sunday school in a state of perfect order at every session, throughout the session, is to many a superintendent a wistful, far-away dream. Disorder is usual at the beginning of school; it is liable to come on at any time; and how to bring order out of disorder is an art he has not yet learned.

In this state of wistfulness, if he did but know it, both teachers and pupils fervently join. No teacher, however ambitious and faithful, can do much for a class that forms part of a disorderly school. The very children whose carelessness and irrepressible pranks give the superintendent most concern are ready to welcome a leadership that commands respect and enforces standards. I have often heard boys and young men criticise their superintendent for his laxness in keeping order: I have yet to hear a criticism from such a source on a superintendent's strictness. For the man who would be accounted a success, here is a better test than increased numbers, by far.

Of what elements will this order consist, supposing the superintendent is fortunate enough to secure it? It is hardly worth while to seek a partial victory. School order must be not make-believe but real.

Silence first, of course, till the traditional pin-drop can be heard all over the room. This is not unattainable: many a Sunday school has reached such a condition, and has even learned to assume it on call. Then there must be prompt, full and hearty *response* in rising, reading, singing and other participations in the ritual of worship. The country boys who loaf outside until they hear the second hymn, the young ladies who languidly rise and stand with closed books and mouths at responsive reading,—these are disorderly. Simple as the ritual may be, the school is not orderly until every part is fully sustained.

Attention must also be given to all desk utterances, and to the teachers in class. The call to attention is always the first step in any military operation, however simple. Due *respect* must be rendered to teachers and officers at all times. And every member must show *reverence* for God's word and for the service of worship in his house, as conducted in the Sunday school. Surely nothing short of these five elementary proprieties of conduct can be accepted as satisfactory Sunday-school order.

Returning now to our book's general figure, we have in the need of good order a clear channel light, toward which the superintendent should steadily steer; and we may feel sure that when our ship's company learns the captain's intention, all but a very few will join in the effort with a will.

Not every leader who is troubled with disorder realizes what he needs in order to win. He works on the problem of order only when disorder be-

comes troublesome. But real order cannot be had that way. Good order is like a set of good teeth. If you want it, you must work for it without waiting for toothache to remind you. In the light of the five points already mentioned, the superintendent should formulate his own standard for the order to be attained in his Sunday school; and then he should constantly study his school to see how nearly the standard is being attained.

In any such study, the place to begin is with the conduct of the leader himself. That must be fully up to standard throughout the session. Children are observant watchers and merciless critics. They make no allowances for emergencies, the need of being ready for the next item in the service, courtesies to a platform visitor, or any other such excuse, so easily made by the leader for his own breach of rules. They must know by personal observation that their superintendent's standard of order for himself is higher than that which he seeks for in them.

Manifestly, the only way to attain this will be through the habit of complete preparation, in advance of the session, for every item of the service. Organization, also, must be so well adjusted that officers will know and perform their duties without the need of reminders and commands. The leader must learn the art of thinking ahead of his program. And as leader of his Sunday school in its worship of Almighty God, he must in prayer and quiet meditation, if but for five minutes, prepare his heart for true and reverent conduct of what should be a holy service.

When the superintendent's own conformity to the desired standard is thus assured, a brief caucus of officers, with a simple and friendly explanation of what is planned, and a few practical suggestions, will set ushers, secretaries and other helpers at work on themselves. Then, in the monthly workers' conference of the school, the main discussion for one month may well be given to the question of what constitutes good order in a teacher's conduct, and what the extent of its influence may be. When these steps have been taken and have begun to produce their effect, it will be time to call for better order on the pupils' part.

So much for our channel light on the edge of the shore, the practical end we seek to realize. By what more distant light of theory and principle shall we seek to realize it? In this case, theory is simpler than practice. To make a school come to order by force of authority is usually impossible, as many a leader has found. Sunday-school order cannot be enforced, because we have no penalty heavy enough to deter from disorder. But when we begin to consider the problem educationally, light breaks at once.

The first thing we see from the educational view-point is that, even if we should succeed in enforcing order, such order would have almost no educational value. The only order that trains the will and builds character is that which comes from willing hearts. Order must be elicited rather than enforced. It must come as the free expression of the school's own desire to be orderly. All must be enlisted in the common project of having

an attentive, orderly and reverent Sunday school.

We can also see now that such order will seldom express itself in pin-dropping silence. When the orderly school feels the need for silence, silence will come. Order is regulated and purposeful activity. A stock exchange at the height of the market is really as orderly as a battalion standing at attention. Every broker, messenger and blackboard clerk in the whole mad and noisy whirl knows what he has to do and is doing it. The most orderly Sunday schools we have sometimes make considerable noise and appear to be in a state of confusion.

Now if the members of the Sunday school were only made of wood, like piano keys, and were rigged in a mechanism, no doubt the session could be run in the sort of "order" that some superintendents would like to achieve. Unfortunately for that ideal, they are all alive. But fortunately for the higher educational ideal, they are also responsive to suggestion and appeal, and are educable into new habits and better standards and worthier attitudes of mind and heart. Life and hope are twins.

To the unthinking superintendent disorder is a personal annoyance which for his own comfort and satisfaction he seeks to overcome. To the educator it indicates that the school is failing to teach some of its most important lessons. To teach the habits, standards and attitudes that produce a state of good order is part of the school's course of study in religion.

Of what avail, indeed, are the other lessons that

we try to teach—Bible stories, golden texts, principles and precepts—if with them our children learn contempt for things divine and indifference to the feelings and the privileges of others? Which is of greater value for character, an attitude of reverence and respect for sacred things, a standard of right behaviour in God's house and toward teachers, elders and comrades, and a habit of courtesy in so conducting oneself as not to inconvenience or disturb others, or all the Bible knowledge that could be learned by the most diligent Sunday-school student in a year?

The life of the Sunday school affords many opportunities for training in those personal qualities that make people orderly, attentive, reverent and considerate of others. In the classes and departments, under the superintendent's supervision, and in all the societies and clubs and bands over which the church has jurisdiction, this training work should be going on. In the larger assemblies of the school, weekly and quarterly, the lessons so learned may be drilled on and set to work and the standards further established. The workers' conference, having spent one meeting discussing order as a teacher's duty, may proceed the following month to consider how those elements of character that produce order may be taught, and by whom such teaching may be given.

In this branch of Christianity the superintendent is the head teacher of the school. Here are a few practical suggestions for his consideration:

1. Lift the strain on order. Shorten the service, reducing desk talk to the absolute minimum

of what must be announced and explained. Make prayers and readings brief and simple. By careful preparation eliminate waits and breaks in the service. Familiar hymn-tunes should start with a chord only.

2. Labour to find for every individual some specific thing to do. Consider each pupil as an applicant for a job in the running of school, department or class. Then, with the help of the teachers, department principals and school officers, reduce the percentage of unemployment until it vanishes entirely.

3. Among the jobs thus distributed will be those of the sentries, outer and inner, to hold closed the Sunday-school doors during the few minutes of reverent opening worship. The outside sentry pacifies the late-comers, impatient to enter; while the inside sentry awaits the cue or signal to open the door.

4. Forestall initial disorder. The way to break noise and disorder at the opening is never to let it begin. Arrange a sequence of events from the time the doors are opened by the janitor until the service begins. Go to church half an hour early and watch what happens there.

5. It is now the standard practice in the modern Sunday school to give the pupils, at least those of intermediate and higher grades, a part in the arranging of the order of worship. Let them help to plan the next quarter's service, and let some of them also help to carry it out. They may not read and pray as well as the minister could; but they

will carry the school with them better than he can, and that is what the leader is after.

In these and other ways the leader who seeks good order will democratize his school. He will give every pupil a sense of part-proprietorship in the enterprise. When the whole school learns by experience that it is helping to do things, the worship and all else will have a significance to the members that it never had before. When song-time comes they will sing. When prayer is due they will pray. And when, to effect a dignified beginning, or to hear some especially important announcement, it is necessary to have perfect silence, the superintendent may safely "let her drop!"

IV

OPENING AND CLOSING EXERCISES

UNCONSCIOUS inheritance is the strong force among life's controls. We do things, hold views, love and hate persons and parties, not because we have considered reasons and reached conclusions, but because we have come into possession of these habits, views and attitudes and have held them as our own. Most of them we acquired so unconsciously and so long ago that now they are quite a part of ourselves. We shun the company of those likely to attack or question them. When, despite our efforts, we find them questioned, we hotly defend them as part and parcel of our own dear personality. The man who cheerfully greets the call to change his ways of thinking and living is rare indeed.

From this well known trait of humanity the Sunday-school superintendent is not exempt. For the seasoned superintendents of many years' experience and the younger men who with modest docility have taken up and continued their honoured predecessors' ways, the last ten or fifteen years have been a hard time. Within that brief period there have come more and larger and more disturbing calls for change in administrative method than in all the century before. And the changes that seem to impend look worse and more

disturbing still. But we need not to borrow trouble: it is here now. What is a Sunday school without its main room, and its opening and closing exercises, led of course by the superintendent, and based on a uniform lesson? Today the main room is not, and the uniform lesson is not, and the reformer would take the exercises away. Why may not the superintendent say with Jacob, "All these things are against me"?

The reply may fitly use another word of Scripture. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Even Jacob found that it paid to give up Benjamin. In playing checkers, the only way to win is by giving one and taking two. But there is a real doubt in many minds. Will what we have given of the old way be surpassed or even equaled by what we gain in the new?

The old plan of running the Sunday-school session gave us a large, impressive, desk-centered service, with a visible unity that had in it considerable educational power. Being all under one leader's control, it was simple to organize and run. The new writers and speakers may not credit the traditions of spiritual impressiveness that belonged to the better type of old-line Sunday-school sessions. But we who were "scholars" and then workers and leaders in those sessions; we who have seen Jacobs and Schauffler and Pepper and Wanamaker and Marion Lawrance and other "mighty men" leading their Sunday schools of a generation ago,—we know.

And we of the Sunday-school field also know,

what the doctrinaires find it hard to admit and allow for, that even in our most densely populated states from five to ten per cent of the Sunday-school membership meets, and will indefinitely continue to meet, in one room; that a much larger percentage in these states has only a main room and a primary room; and that in more than half of the states and the Canadian provinces these one-room and two-room housings prevail, with but a small minority meeting in such buildings as we usually think of as the least that religious education can successfully use. Whatever our view as to a general Sunday-school service for all departments above the primary, or for all including the primary, conditions in North America make certain that such services will continue to be conducted in more than half our Sunday schools for years to come.

Acknowledging then that mass exercises for the Sunday school when rightly conducted have a definite educational value, and that many Sunday schools have no present choice but to continue them, what are their elements of power? Can we analyze them in terms of modern educational science? What are these values that the reformers would take away?

The great tragedies of Greek literature derived much of their impressiveness from their rigid maintenance of the unities of time and place. Everything in the plot must happen within something like the time of the actual performance; and the action must take place in a single scene, like the court in front of the royal palace, or be related

there by a messenger. The Elizabethan dramatists broke with these classic unities. They lengthened the permissible time of their plot and varied its scenes; and in so doing they gained in freedom and breadth and lost in power. But it took the genius of an Æschylus or a Sophocles, working in the deeply religious atmosphere of the old Greek theater, to make full use of that power; and Shakespeare and his fellows did well to let it go.

The old-style main-room Sunday-school session likewise has, or may have, its unities; and in these resides its power. He who would, and he who must, conduct such sessions probably knows already many of their elements of weakness. He should also realize wherein he can make them strong.

First comes the unity of assembly. When we all gather and sit down, old and young, in the presence of God, the very fact of such a coming together makes an impression on our souls. The simple faith of childhood and the settled convictions of maturity and age are subtly radiated over to the restless minds of adolescence; and there results, first outwardly and then in spirit, a common attitude of reverence and acceptation of God's message and will that makes worship real and instruction easy. Any superintendent whose adults and juveniles meet in separate rooms for independent worship knows by experience how hard it is to lead the remaining company in the same kind of formal worship that served the united school's need so well before. The old unity of the family

group is gone; and with it has gone a sense of spiritual leadership and power.

Even more conspicuous in the old ideal is unity of procedure. It is the good old rule that the program of the main room shall be organized around a single theme. Once this theme was the Biblical topic furnished by the uniform lesson. For full forty years this plan was standard for the large majority of North American Sunday schools; and, as the "line of least resistance," thousands of superintendents are trying to follow it still. If that were the only way to secure unity of procedure, the argument for continuing to follow it would be strong.

But even in the heyday of lesson uniformity a seasonal unity was secured at Christmastide and other generally observed occasions. The increase of special days and causes has now multiplied the number of Sundays for which a definite theme, ready-made to the leader's hand, may serve as the unifying basis of the sessional program. Little ingenuity is needed to expand the list of these themes until every Sunday in every quarter is provided with an appropriate or at least a profitable general theme. By preparing, posting and following a calendar of these themes, the superintendent releases himself and his classes from dependence on a uniform lesson. Every class may now study the lesson best suited to its needs; and the unity of the session program need not be thereby in the least diminished, but can rather on many Sundays be sensibly increased.

In planning this session program, the superin-

tendent will of course remember that the theme for the day, however central, is but one of the ideas to be embodied. The selected Scripture reading, the brief story or desk talk, one prayer and one or two of the hymns, will carry and enforce the main thought of the day. But for the few minutes of reverent opening worship the school will follow, for the quarter or other customary term, its familiar appointed order; at the offering to God of gifts and records of class attendance and faithfulness there will be an appropriate verse of song and word of prayer; at the beginning of class study there may be a brief prayer and Bible song; and if the school assembles for dismissal, fidelity to vows and purposes formed will be the closing thought. The program may thus aim to secure one strong common impression, while at the same time reinforcing every good impression that the members otherwise receive.

Harmonizing well with these unities of assembly and of procedure is the third unity of the old-time Sunday-school session, the unity of spiritual objective. The great superintendents of the last generation were after one thing. To use their own phrase, they sought their scholars' conversion; and under that not very logical term they included a range of ideals and efforts which their successors will do well to study and follow.

These superintendents did not know "genetic psychology" by any such name; nor had they graded their classes by departments in accordance with the more recently established standards. Neither had they given much attention to differ-

ences of personality, temperament, environment and vocational choice. They had not sought to recast their programs and their hymnology in terms of the social gospel. But they did sense well the big facts of sin, need, grace and power, as taught in the New Testament; and they realized that, notwithstanding the vast personal differences of age, sex and condition in the school before them, these facts had a certain amount of common significance for all. Leaving to the teachers the task of finding and meeting the diverse needs, these leaders used their mass assembly and their unified program to impress on old and young the common elements of the evangelical Christian religion. Testimony from the graduates of such schools as to what such impressions meant for them are many and strong. The needs that the old gospel in every age has found and satisfied are with us still; and Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Modern educational analysis sees in the impressions which may result from wise use of these unities what it calls "forms of conduct-control." Alone, they are insufficient, and may fail of permanent result; but wisely used, and reinforced by controls secured through class, home, church, reading and other means, their value may be vast. The superintendent who uses them with understanding of their purpose and their limitations, and who watches for the religious results they are due to bring, is an educator.

Now, having noted thus briefly the values of the older type of session, the "opening and closing

exercises" of our Sunday-school fathers, and aware that modern practice discards this method in favour of worship graded by departments and pupil-management or at least pupil-participation for the adolescents, rather than a program led throughout by one adult leader, let us see how, in the inevitable transition from the older to the newer methods, the values we have proved and know can be carried over.

1. The mass assembly of the whole Sunday school may be held once a quarter or oftener, as a festival or commemorative occasion. Sixty years ago "the Sunday-school concert" or program of united religious exercises on a common and uplifting theme was a standard feature. It might well be revived for the value of the impressions which, when well conducted, it regularly secured.

2. In the beginners, primary and junior departments, where these have separate rooms, the principle of sessional unity may be discussed with the principals and plans made for embodying it in weekly and quarterly programs suited to the ages concerned. Where the department leaders are graduates of summer schools and training schools, their programs will doubtless give the superintendent as much help for his own assembly program as he can give for theirs; but the conference will aid both parties notwithstanding. The young people's and adult classes, whose worship-needs are largely met in the pulpit services of the church, will naturally reduce their separate worship to a brief opening service and a closing

prayer. Even so, many of them might well study how to give to their worship a higher dignity and greater educational value.

3. If separate rooms for the full session time can be arranged for the children, the older young people and the adults, the leader of the main assembly should at once take steps to admit to partnership leaders from among the boys and girls. Each class should be organized for the carrying out of its own program. The presidents of these classes should be organized as a council for the young people's division of the school. This council, with its adult leader, who may be the superintendent, and with one or two of the teachers if needed as advisers, should be asked to prepare the session programs for the coming quarter; they or their appointees taking the principal parts therein.

There are risks, to be sure, in this policy. But these risks should be understood, faced, and cheerfully undertaken. Victories, educational and otherwise, come to leaders who dare. This principle applies to pastors and superintendents, no less than to the young folks for whose training we are concerned.

And what of the risks of continuing to run the Sunday-school worship as it has been run heretofore? One-man services, however well managed, rarely hold the active boys for more than a few years after the adolescent change. Whatever their value to those in attendance, they are certainly of no benefit to those who have dropped out. But where the young people's division is being run on these new lines, it is customary to find the older

boys and girls staying with the school as steadily as they did in their primary and junior years. Leakage of older pupils is a Sunday-school calamity; and we now can see that it is a needless one.

4. In further application of this principle, participation in the mass assembly programs, and possibly even the general conduct of one such assembly, may be entrusted to one or more young people who have shown themselves able to lead their own adolescent services with earnestness and ability. The average superintendent enjoys the sensation of marshaling a processional, leading a rousing chorus, welcoming visitors, reading a list of honours, distributing gifts, introducing a speaker and conducting devotions. Why should he count this pleasant preeminence "a thing to be grasped"? In the kingdom of God we sacrifice and serve. Why not use the stimulus of the festal occasion to bring to some rising youth a realization of the leadership powers that God has given him, by making him master of ceremonies for the day?

Modern religious education stands firmly for the use of material graded to fit the needs of growing childhood and youth. It counts the worship of the graded group as part of the educational material. It holds that the common social life of the group, as it meets, plays, studies, works and worships together, means far more for the pupil's religious education than the lesson matter as usually defined. It demands for each group the advantage of separation in work, play, study and worship, in order to make possible a distinctive educational program for that group. Consequently, it calls for

a breaking up of the old mass assembly into a series of separate assemblies, in each of which a plan of school work, adapted to the average age-needs of the group, may be carried to completion, and the spiritual aims of the department or division successfully attained.

It is right to honour the earlier methods which these later plans must change. The steps of transition may well be delayed till the leader is sure that the new program is ready. But he who takes the responsibility for blocking these changes because he personally loves the old ways should be honest about it. Play fair with the issue! Though the old be good, yet, if the new is better, the duty to move forward is clear. Average leaders wait till God, by taking away the first, forces acceptance of the second. Great leaders, anticipating necessity and welcoming the vision, move forward of themselves.

V

THE COLLECTION

THE Sunday school is a flexible institution. Wherever established, its distinctive characteristics appear, be its leaders scholarly or simple, its neighbourhood a crowded city ward, a "gilt-edged suburb," a rural county-seat, the open country, or the frontier. The membership of good, well-managed Sunday schools that I have known ranges from twenty-eight to over three thousand; and there are others both smaller and larger than these. And among the common features that bind all Sunday schools together and make them collectively one great American institution, the feature most certain of inclusion is the weekly collection.

For many years it has been the fashion among local Sunday-school convention speakers to object to this word. Such speakers often refer to the difference between a collection and an offering, and urge the use of the latter word. Sundry anecdotes are told to enforce the relative littleness of a mere "collection." But why? The two words designate the same thing.

The fact which these speakers sometimes fail to make clear is that the distinction lies not in the thing but rather in the point of view from which

the thing is regarded. To those who "lift" the money it is a collection: they collect it. To those who put it on the plate it is an offering: they offer it. What the speakers mean to say, then, is that in dealing with Sunday-school contributions we should take the side of the givers, rather than that of the collectors and those on whose behalf they act. If our sympathy is with those who are asked to give, and we concern ourselves that they shall know the facts, understand the issues and take an interest in the object, their "offering" will be large. If our mind is on how much we need to raise, our "collection" will be small. It is this well-known fact in money-raising experience that the speakers have in mind.

If then you want more money from the Sunday school, do not collect it. Let the members offer it. Everything that makes it a collection tends to make it small. Everything that makes it the free expression of the members' wish to give tends to make it large. This is really one application of the basic Christian principle that we save by losing. Paradoxical as it may sound, by not wanting "a good collection today," we tend to get it. We rather need, first, a clear and strong sense of what the money is to do, and then a desire that the school shall share this realization with us. The responsibility for the school's response, after they have heard the story, rests with them.

Incidentally, in the light of this principle, what shall we think of those plans for raising a fixed sum from an annual meeting by drawing squares on a blackboard and then crossing them off as the

subscriptions are announced, or making an appeal for funds by printing a list of so many subscriptions at $100 each, so many at $25, and so on, which if secured will give us all we need? Are not these devices clear proof that the leaders are thinking solely of their own task and not at all of the real duty of their constituents? Their concern is to get the money. The members' concern is, or should be, to understand the need; to weigh the cause and, if it appeals to them, to embrace it and make it their own; and then to determine how large a gift will cover their share of the common obligation. Blackboards should first of all be used for information, explanation, clarification; circulars of appeal should tell the story rather than reiterate the want; and every would-be collector should make himself over into a loyal agent of his clients, the givers, to see that they get full satisfaction for every dollar given. From such givers, offerings will overflow.

Another fact about collections in the Sunday school was impressed on my mind by an experience that came to me early in my pastoral ministry. I may put it this way: Children, and older folks too when in children's company, will give more than twice as much for others as they will for themselves. Their own needs and the financial interests of their Sunday school do not arouse their enthusiasm: the realized and visualized needs of others do.

If therefore the giving and the paying of the parish can be arranged in a circle, each party doing

something for the other while the other party does something for him, we shall have introduced into our Sunday-school machine, on its financial side, the long-looked-for principle of perpetual motion. We shall have all the power we need to run our own works, and some for foreign missions and other extra-parish enterprises.

My experience came thus: Our little village Sunday school was attached to a new and struggling church, on which lay the heavy burden of a six-hundred-dollar mortgage. The Ladies' Aid had just finished paying for the papering and lighting of the building and was looking around for another financial objective. I had an idea; and I proceeded to lay it before them. "If you will assume and carry the expense of our Sunday school," said I, "I will see that the Sunday school pays off that mortgage." They agreed, and appointed a committee to visit the school and learn what was needed. That visitation, with the new interest it implied, was the first dividend on my plan.

I well recall the motherly eye with which that committee looked over our Sunday school. They at once declared that we needed a new set of hymn-books. Then and there they began to plan for raising the money to pay for that and our other needs. They asked for our budget and then went to work. And when I told the Sunday school what was going on, how anxious the ladies were that we should have all we needed, what we were now to do, and why it was necessary, the way they went at that mortgage was a joy!

The business merit of this plan lay in its capacity to generate motive power. Compare its enthusiasm-evoking power with that of the financial devices already discussed. Instead of losing interest the plan grew on everybody and with reason. Each week saw the school's equipment improving, the church's interest in its school increasing, the children's loyalty to their church deepening, and the mortgage going down. Any other concrete want of the church might have been "sold" to the school, as their share of the parish burden; and of course the Ladies' Aid simply represented the church, which in its annual budget should provide for the full expense of religious education. Churches do not realize what they are losing financially by delaying this right and reasonable move. A little adjustment, a little salesmanship on the leader's part, and a little of patience and determination, ought to start this perpetual motion to running in any church field.

Success with collections, however, calls for a third condition. For all givers, and particularly for children, we must provide some regular reminder that a gift is due. The traditional church way is to pass the plate. But that reminder comes too late to be of avail for those who are unprovided with money for a suitable offering. Hence the modern wide use of offering envelopes, one to be filled each Sunday before starting for church. The habit of filling one's envelope in good season is soon learned; and—with the children—money so devoted is not so likely to be diverted if temptation

should meet the giver in the way. Credit for offering brought can also be recorded without publicity as to how much or how little is given.

Sunday-school offering envelopes, therefore, when properly planned and used to meet Sunday-school as distinct from church conditions, are a desirable educational device, apart from their function as a means of regulating and increasing revenue. They aid in the building of character. To that cheerfulness and generosity in giving which we have already discussed they add the grace of regularity.

Weekly offering envelopes, as now currently manufactured and used, are uniform for the year, except for the weekly dates and the designation of special Sundays like Easter. To use these is a good plan for the church. While essentially a collecting device rather than an outlet for offerings, the plan gives to adults sufficient scope for exercising interest in church support and zeal for the included missionary and benevolent objects. Grown persons have learned to think by the year. All can, and some do, make their regular weekly payments the real and willing fulfillment of a generous decision made at the annual meeting or in the every-member canvass.

Before any such plan, however successful in the church, can properly be taken into the Sunday school, it must be modified to fit the Sunday school's distinctive needs. The Sunday school is a school. It is the school of the church. It includes many whose families are not otherwise re-

lated to this church. While many of its members are adults, the larger and by far the more important part consists of children. Church officers usually think of the year's needs, rather than of the larger gains to come through the education of givers; hence a proposed Sunday-school plan, to be available for church adoption, must promise something good for this year as well as for the future. Thousands of churches expect their Sunday schools to pay their own way and contribute something to church support besides; while other churches take pride in receiving from their well-supported Sunday schools nothing at all. The plan must therefore be financially adjustable to the local situation.

The first thing to do, evidently, is to make the plan educational. To cast its lines is a task for the educational director rather than the treasurer. There is a gain also in having it so different from the church envelope plan that none shall think of it as a substitute therefor. It should rather be so simplified that it will become a junior giving system, leading up to entrance on the more advanced church system as an honourable promotion. Nevertheless, it should so far embody the principles of this plan that habits gained under the junior system will carry over into the senior system; thus making the Sunday school in this as in other respects the feeder and training-school of the church.

To meet these conditions, the period covered should be not the year but the quarter, divided into monthly units of four Sundays each, with an extra Sunday in one of the three. Thirteen en-

velopes is a wiser supply for a Sunday school than fifty-two: it corresponds to the customary units of lesson supply. In the beginners and primary departments, indeed, the little ones should receive monthly packets of four or five envelopes each.

Then, instead of pouring all collections into an uninteresting common fund, each Sunday's gift should have its own special destination. On some days, especially the odd Sunday of the quarter, there will be one object for the whole school, binding all together in a common endeavour. On other Sundays the gift will be for whatever special object has been chosen by the class or the department. The giving system of each school must be flexible, changing with the growing and changing interests and enthusiasms of its classes. Nothing short of this will meet the educational standards of the modern church school. The standard giving plan for all schools, also, must contain a scale by which, without loss of educational value, it may be adjusted to present congregational ideas; and this scale must be capable of annual change to fit higher ideals as reached.

In other words, the Sunday school's giving should be arranged, like its lessons, on a quarterly calendar. On some Sundays the whole school will give for the local church, thus recognizing its pastor as a preacher of the gospel and its church as an agency for the saving and upbuilding of souls. For a wealthy church, one Sunday a quarter may suffice for practice in this needed lesson. A struggling mission church, on the other hand, might take every offering of the quarter but three, or even

one, according to its need of the revenue probably to be so secured. Next year it may feel like releasing one or more additional offerings per quarter for missionary and benevolent uses. Whether rich or poor, however, the church should designate some one of its specific and visible needs for the school to attack and pay for.

On Sundays not reserved for giving to the church, special gifts by departments and classes will be the rule. The arrangement of these is strictly an educational and not a financial problem; and in its settlement the pupils must have a real and not merely a nominal share. Even in the youngest departments the leaders should offer the children some choice between suggested objects; and for the older classes the question of where gifts are to go forms a problem of high educational value, to be debated and settled in earnest and then followed up with studies on what the money is doing. If adult advisers handle such matters wisely, the gifts can easily be guided for the most part into channels approved by the church and in conformity with its denominational calls and apportionments.

The mechanical side of this plan, as contrasted with the usual duplex envelope outfit of the church, is simple and cheap. A supply of coin envelopes is needed, of uniform size, in two or more colours, with larger coin envelopes for holding each member's monthly or quarterly set. The task of making up and distributing these sets is a good activity for one of the classes; provided it is treated as a

public responsibility and not as a mere assistance to some adult official. The colours may be assorted according to the quarter's calendar of objects. Once these colours are familiar to the children, with the Sundays in the month when the various classes of offerings are due, the envelopes, at least in a small Sunday school, can be used without printing. The week's envelopes of each class will be put by the class secretary into the weekly report envelope; and any gift can be credited to its proper cause, even if brought on the wrong Sunday. Whenever individual credit for offering brought is to be recorded, the giver's name should be put by him on his envelope or checked on the roll as the gift is handed in.

But what of the annual pledge to give a certain definite sum per week, so much for church support, so much for benevolence? What of the ledger account with each numbered giver, and the quarterly statement showing how much is still due? What of the annual every-member canvass? Have we not outgrown the old days of the annual sermon on foreign missions, followed by an offering that was spasmodic, impulsive, and as to amount very uncertain? For the church, yes. But all these are features of the financier's ideal. He is working on adults. He is seeking an adequate and steady income. With the merits of his methods we have not now to do. What we seek is the most effective system of giving for a religious school. Our first concern is not the raising of money: it is the raising of children. The very

features that charm the treasurer spoil his plan entirely as an educational proposition for the Sunday school.

So, while the use of envelopes is right for the Sunday school, the system of advance pledges which we usually associate with the envelopes is educationally undesirable. The act of seeking this advance pledge turns the offering into a collection. The fixing of the amount in advance detracts from the gift's educational value. Character is established by free choices. The teacher wants these choices to come frequently, rather than once a year. Uniformity of amount, until it can be made more, is indeed desirable; but this effect should come through the success of the leaders in maintaining a uniformly high level of interest and appeal.

Far more significant than an annual pledge, however generous, is a permanent attitude of stewardship, with a purpose to dedicate to God a definite and increasing proportion of one's income. The church treasurer knows well what such an attitude means for him. In the church the cause of stewardship moves forward slowly: it is hard to teach such lessons to selfish and trammeled-up pewholders who would give thousands if they had ever learned by experience the joy of doing so. Let the church, forgetting to think of its school as a revenue-producer, encourage the superintendent to develop his giving system as an integral part of their school's character-building curriculum, with lessons on tithing and stewardship of all posses-

sions introduced in proper gradation and relationship. The spiritual response to such a policy will be uplifting; the rewards in future years will be golden; and for present financial advances the leaders will not need long to wait.

Every vestige of the collection motive must come out of a Sunday school's financial method before its work of teaching stewardship begins. A teacher suspected of self-interest makes on his pupils no impression. This explains, in part, why the pastor and the church treasurer preach tithing and stewardship with so slight a visible response. But a Sunday school that dares to forget returns in money and think only of returns in character may train its pupils for a life whose time, talents, service and income are alike holy to the Lord.

VI

THE SOCIAL LIFE

A GREAT discovery was made near the beginning of the twentieth century. Like most other discoveries, it had its roots in the past; and after it was once announced, there was ground for the acknowledgment of many prior contributions to the service finally rendered by the discoverer. Though of general application to humanity, it was first developed as a method of work for boys. The way for this discovery was opened by the advances made in the science of psychology.

The old psychology—the "mental philosophy" that our grandfathers studied—drew a sharp distinction between a man's mind and his body. It studied man's mind as a solitary thing, without much consideration of the man's relations with society. It left his religion to the theologians, as something too sacred to be investigated by the secular philosopher. It divided his mind into various faculties and powers, each of which attends to its own separate function, like an organ of the body. Its mode of investigation was for the philosopher to look into his own soul and try to find there the facts and laws of the mind's working. This old psychology engaged the labours of some eminent and noble men, whose works adorn

the history of human thought. But it did not help much in the task of training growing souls for better living.

The new psychology works in a laboratory, begins with the simplest responses to sensations, studies the body along with the mind, and is not afraid to study man's religion along with his other characteristics and powers. It has established the fact that every man, woman and child is one indivisible whole. Man's body joins with his mind, not only in his sensations and motions, but in his deepest feelings and his loftiest thoughts.

"All good things
Are ours; nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul."

So, also, when man remembers, rejoices, resolves or reflects, it is the whole man that does it and not any special organ or faculty of his soul.

This, then, was the discovery: Human life, viewed as a sphere of educational effort, has four sides, physical, mental, social and religious; and these are so closely related that educational progress in any one of the four fields implies constant recognition of the claims of the other three. Whether we teach football, Latin, civics or the Bible; whether we teach in the home, the school, the Sunday school or the street; whatever the hour, the conditions or the place, we are teaching the same boy or girl. Different teachers may give the same boy different lessons; the same teacher may teach widely different subjects; but however ill-assorted the teachings that life brings him, the

boy has no separate file-boxes in which to sort them: by the law of his nature he must somehow make them one. The boy needs an education that is harmonious and unitary; and at the least he needs that we his teachers plan together to train and develop his fourfold life, so that each side shall advance in due proportion, and he shall grow like Jesus, "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men."

As fast as the workers with boys and girls applied this principle, carrying forward as best they could these four lines of education abreast, it became clear that this policy is what the boys and girls want. Teachers who help the boy to play ball and swim and camp may help him also to think and learn. Those who do these things for him may lead him in forming clubs, making friends and joining in larger social enterprises. And those who have thus qualified as his physical, mental and social leaders he will gladly take as his religious leaders also.

So here we have at last the simple explanation of that ever-present difficulty and discouragement of the good old-fashioned Sunday school, the dropping out of the older boys and often of the older girls also. "They got too big to come to Sunday school any more," we used to say. We should rather have said, "When the four sides of their nature had grown and were hungry for sympathy and help, we cared for but one side of the four. We honestly did our best for their religion; but to their physical, mental and social needs we paid no heed, except as these were occasionally involved

in our religious program. They declined our one-sided service and went elsewhere in search of the help we failed to give them." Now that we can more clearly see the educational folly of this one-sidedness, let us try not to make the same mistake again.

Leaving for the time the consideration of what the Sunday-school leader may do directly for the physical and the mental needs of his school, let us face the problem of its social life. What can a superintendent do to build up this side of his Sunday school?

Every session of the Sunday school is a social gathering. Besides the walks and talks we may have before session or after, and the greetings, conversations and united learning, studying and teaching that goes on in each class circle and separate room, there is inspiration in simply coming together in an assembly for worship, in hearing the words from the desk, and in taking part in the singing, giving and other common features. In the old-fashioned Sunday school, where all but the little ones meet in the big "main room," this social feeling is the pupils' chief motive for regular attendance.

But not every pupil, not even every teacher, experiences this social joy every Sunday. In a large Sunday-school assembly, divided only by classes, the newcomer may feel inexpressibly homesick and alone. Where there is little organization and life outside the Sunday session, one may tire of the fellowship of his class and long for a chance to meet and work with some of the other boys and girls

he sees but has no way to meet and know. There is room for improvement in the social life of nearly every Sunday school, large or small, that is still running on the old, ungraded plan.

Like a lighthouse on the shore, then, let us set before our school this goal of a bright, full and all-embracing social life. The whole Sunday school must be a happy company, working, studying, worshiping and often playing together. This will give us more regular attendance, new members, better lessons, larger offerings, heartier singing, a deeper spirituality. It will minister to the social side of the pupils' fourfold life. Such gains are worth while.

In planning to reach this desirable goal, some will think first of a picnic, excursion or outing for the Sunday school, followed by one or more social evenings next fall and winter. Such occasions are indeed desirable and will be needed in a full social-life program. But in themselves they will mean little beyond a transient good time, except to those who help to run them. It is to these hard-working participants that the main social benefits go. The leader must see that every Sunday's session is warmly social in the experience of every attendant. The one way to accomplish this in all but the very small Sunday schools is through effective departmentalization.

The names and ages of the standard departments are now supposedly known to all Sunday-school workers; though it might surprise some writers to learn how many, and which, of the Sunday schools of any given county in this land have

not yet organized by departments beyond the primary. The report of the Indiana Survey, published in 1923, showed that in 256 typical Sunday schools, large and small, of that state, forty-five per cent of the classes were in the unorganized main room. Many junior, intermediate, senior and young people's departments are yet to be organized before we can be said to be on a departmental basis in our North American Sunday-school life.

The department draws together the pupils of like age, capacity and congeniality. It creates a social atmosphere far more inspiring than that of the main room. If its life is developed in its own room by a sympathetic leader, it will be a happy social place; as the primary department for two generations has abundantly proved. And even if the department is but a classification of main-room classes, much can be done to give it social unity and educational force.

In a large city Sunday school I was once made superintendent of a junior department of fourteen classes. We had no separate room; and it was before the days of the International graded lessons. We did however have supplemental lessons; and we kept our yearly grades well distinguished. But our ninety or a hundred nine-to-twelve-year-olds, as we then grouped them, had no social life apart from that of the school as a whole. As we could not get together in a junior room, we chartered an electric car instead, and spent a day on a picnic ground. The expedient worked like a charm. After that day we had a real junior department;

and the classes went forward loyally with their graded work, proudly conscious of their departmental unity. The intermediates would not have fancied our sort of picnic: for them the leaders would have had to work out a different plan, in which the boys and girls themselves had much more to do.

Individual classes, through organization and wise adult leadership, can often develop so rich a weekday program of life and service that most of their social hunger will be met; though there will still be need for tying the class programs together with larger departmental and divisional plans, leading up to the general all-school affairs already referred to. Such times enable the ambitious class or grade or department to present its dialogue, debate, pageant, dramatization or other performance before a stimulating audience, or to match its athletic or Bible-studying prowess against another company. No live Sunday school need be dependent on outside talent for its shows: there is always more unused ability waiting to be brought out than has ever yet been asked. And some of the most interesting evenings will be those devoted mainly to the exhibition of what the classes have been learning in their Sunday sessions.

As modern students of the problem now insist, the curriculum of religious education properly includes all that the church school plans for its pupils to experience and learn. If it is deemed wise for a kindergarten to play a game, for a boys' club or class to go on a hike or swim, or for young folks to hold a social or give a dramatization, these

activities must be counted strictly as part of the school's curriculum for the group concerned. Our habitual association of the word with a set of printed lessons needs revision.

Much today is being written and preached about social religion. Some hold firmly that religion means living like Jesus, and that—since he lived among men and women and children—it means living and learning to live a social life in his spirit. If that is so, then this social life of the Sunday school, lived in groups by classes, departments and as a whole, and guided by the leaders so as to represent his will and example, is the Sunday school's real course of lessons; and those printed in the quarterlies and studied in the classes are merely the "explanatory notes."

VII

GRADING

DID you ever go up a moving staircase? I did the other day. It was at an elevated railway station. I stepped across a line to a moving jointed platform. This platform carried me along on the floor level for a few feet; then the joint on which I was standing rose, became a step in a stair, and bore me up the slope to the train level. There the joints again flattened out, and I stepped off to the motionless floor.

To step on that moving platform is quite an experience. If it traveled so for five minutes, going round and round while the mechanical organ played a tune, many a nickel could be taken in for the pleasure and excitement of a ride. But the people who come to the railway station step on the platform because they want to get upstairs. What interests them is not the level motion but the lift. The hurrying parent and the delighted child sometimes differ at this point. In a few years, however, the same child will be glad enough to ride up quickly and catch his car for high school. It's all in the point of view.

There are still among us a good many Sunday schools that run on the ungraded plan. Of course there is a primary department or class; and there is usually also—not always—an adult class, into

which from time to time drift the remains of classes that once were the pride of the main room. All the other classes are simply groups of pupils that have been assigned to teachers without a thought of what grade the class represented, and how long the assignment was to run. If instead of that moving staircase there were a broad sloping pathway, it might suggest the educational movement of such a school. The groups would walk slowly up the hill, changing shape from time to time, and getting to the top irregularly and with some exertion. If there were paths here and there into the park on either side, and no urgent call to catch any particular train, we may be sure that not all who started would arrive at the upper level.

Sunday schools that continue to run in this fashion usually also prefer the ungraded uniform lessons. Going through the Bible on an eight-years' course, all ages using a lesson based on one common passage, is like riding on the level platform. To be sure, we have now different adaptations of the one lesson, just as the children on the merry-go-round may select the chariot or animal that takes their fancy or that the careful parent deems the safer conveyance. But we do not change our level. We have our ride, and a fine one it is; but when the music stops we get off at the same place where we got on.

"Gradus" is Latin for a step. Grading the Sunday school does not mean adding to our numbers, nor building more rooms, nor using different quarterlies. It means facing the fact that our main purpose is to get upstairs. Our Sunday school is

not a picnic park, but an elevated railway station. If these children and their parents do not realize that they need an effective education in religion, we must realize it for them. They need grades or steps by which they can rise, year by year, to the level of well-trained Christian manhood and womanhood.

Continuing our figure, we may build a fixed staircase. That would represent a Sunday school graded in organization but using ungraded lessons. Some would thus reach the top; but the climb is long and arrival uncertain. A graded lesson course, properly selected and installed, adds to the stairs a lifting power that accelerates growth in knowledge and multiplies the chances of success.

The moving platform that makes the stairs is jointed into treads, because by this form of construction it will most safely and surely carry us to the upper level. For the same reason the modern Sunday school has discarded the old way of launching classes whenever need arose, and then leaving teacher and pupils to go on indefinitely. By establishing yearly grades, grouped by threes into departments, progress is made orderly and insured to all. A set of graded lessons, either one for each grade, or one for each department, supplies the educational lift from one year's study to the one next higher. Grading by no means makes good education certain. But it is an indispensable condition. And it is just as necessary for religious education as for any other.

That moving staircase does not follow the passengers into the train. The only reason it is able

to keep on lifting the crowds is because the treads form a belt, continuously revolving. The same tread that takes me up will soon be carrying another. The graded Sunday school runs in just that way. The teachers at regular intervals part with their classes and travel back to the floor where those they have been carrying stood when they first stepped on. Stepping on and off is awkward and disconcerting, especially the stepping off. But that is a small price to pay for the gain of the lift; as the passengers show by flocking to the escalator and avoiding the stair. On Promotion Day, in a well graded Sunday school, those promoted to the next higher department go with enthusiasm; and the teachers they have left take their new classes, eager to give them the benefit of the experience they could never have utilized had they kept on with the same children.

The moving staircase has wheels and a motor, and somewhere in the system there is a licensed engineer. Graded Sunday school work also calls for educational engineering. Someone in the force must plan the course, choose the lessons, supervise the teaching, and handle the grading of the pupils and the promotions and transfers at the end of the year. Fortunately, every Sunday school has a headquarters somewhere, to which it can write for guidance and suggestion; while nearly every Sunday school can send its delegates to conventions, institutes, and schools of instruction where graded engineering is explained. And some fathers and mothers in some churches are wise enough to provide their Sunday school with the money it needs

to install its moving staircase, and so set their children's feet safely traveling upward toward an educated Christian life.

Changing an ungraded Sunday school into one fully graded, with its moving staircase in successful operation, looks to many superintendents like a rather hazardous venture. It does indeed require patience, sacrifice, the leading of many people into new ways and opinions, and an intelligent plan of campaign. The difficulties seem as steep as some hills the motorist faces at the end of a level stretch of road. They never amount to much when taken on good momentum. But the driver must know how to handle his car.

For one thing, nearly all Sunday schools are partly graded already, with a primary department organized separately from the classes of the main room. All that is needful is to see that the graduates are regularly promoted when they reach a certain level, combined of age, size, school grade and general ripeness for transfer. This is usually somewhere near the pupil's ninth birthday. Fix an annual date for this transfer, such as can later be used for all transfers in all grades. The usual date is the last Sunday in September; but many schools prefer a date in June. Make the transfer a ceremony, and prepare for it by setting apart the graduating class among the primary children and encouraging them to learn some extra Bible and hymn work to exhibit on Promotion Day; also by providing classes or new teachers to receive them when promoted. One step of our moving staircase is at work already!

Some leaders hesitate to carry grading beyond this point until rooms can be found for the departments. Others plead the small size of their school. The room problem was faced in the last chapter. Rooms do not make departments; but a department that was resolved to live and work in spite of its having no room would soon find itself with friends willing to help it get one. As to size, what has that to do with the need of each child for a graded religious education? Many a well graded Sunday school runs for years with fewer than fifty members. These are cheap excuses. The world calls for a generation educated in Christ's religion; and every superintendent, however untrained and hesitant to undertake educational engineering, must show his courage and refit his school till it is fully able to meet the century's challenge and play its part in the free American system of local religious education.

Other doubters have heard the modern call for weekday religious education, with its emphasis on the Sunday school's inability to give in one short hour a week all the education in religion that our children need. Hence they ask, Why trouble to grade and refit our Sunday school, since we shall soon have something far better? This attitude reminds one of those Christians who fervently sing:

> "Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small";

and because it is not theirs, they give next to nothing. If weekday religious instruction ever does come into a community, it will be because thor-

oughly graded and educationally administered Sunday schools have created the demand and pointed the way. The brighter the prospect for any kind of weekday religious instruction, the greater the urgency that every Sunday school be made now as modern and educational as leadership and church support make possible.

In grading a backward Sunday school, it is well to take up one department at a time. After the primary department will come the junior, including the classes whose ages run from nine to eleven. For these classes a superintendent or principal should be found, given a book on modern junior methods, and if possible sent to a summer school. The children of four and five may then be set off from the primary children of six to eight and organized as a beginners' department, with similar helps for the new beginners' teacher. Some schools find room also for a "cradle-roll class" of three-year-olds, which often meets during the hour of morning worship. When the departments of the Children's Division are thus in working order and ready to promote the first set of graded twelve-year-old junior graduates, the time will be ripe for starting the intermediate department, ages twelve to fourteen. The senior department, fifteen to seventeen, and the young people's department, eighteen to twenty-four approximately, will come later still, unless they have leaders ready to begin at once.

The number of classes in each department is determined of course by the size of the Sunday school. Unless quite large, the beginners' class

may work together without distinction of age. The primary class should have three grades representing the three years of the course, the three or more classes grouping together boys and girls without distinction of sex. Three grades should also be distinguished in the junior department, even if to do so it is necessary to teach boys and girls together. In each department the oldest group will prepare for promotion to the next department; and the idea of thus gaining a new and higher standing, with added privileges and responsibilities, will be made attractive to the children. The teachers, meanwhile, working on department problems under their respective principals, will be led to look forward with satisfaction to Promotion Day, when with a new and younger class they can begin again, with more experience, the yearly round of their departmental service.

In the intermediate and senior departments the ruling principle is pupil responsibility. More and better teaching and leadership than ever is needed from the adult workers; but this must be given with an ever increasing recognition of the capacity and desire of the pupils to do things themselves. Every class, therefore, must be an organization, whose president shall sit on the department council. Superintendent, secretary and all other officers of the department as far as may be are to be recruited from among the pupils, coached and encouraged by the "counselor," as the intermediate and senior superintendents are now called, and left free to carry forward the work of worship, management and departmental activities in their own

way. To an old-fashioned worker this seems like a dangerous experiment; but its value as a method has been abundantly shown. Patience and faith are indeed called for. The child-leaders will make as many blunders as their elders ever did; and not all adult leaders will succeed in letting their young charges sufficiently alone. But responsibility is a great school; and adolescent departments thus organized feel their need of counsel and lessons far more than when adult teachers and officers do it all.

The value of graded organization in a Sunday school is self-evidencing. While new it must necessarily encounter many obstacles, principally in the habits and personal preferences of those accustomed to other ways. But every year of graded life makes it easier to run the school in graded fashion next year; and if leaders in church and school are friendly to educational progress and willing to give the new ways a fair and patient trial, the danger-point of return to ungraded work will soon be passed and the school will move on to a period of increasingly fruitful service.

VIII

CHOOSING THE LESSONS

WHEN I was a boy, I heard Wendell Phillips deliver his great lecture on "The Lost Arts." As a worker among the Sunday schools I have often since been reminded of that lecture's title.

For thirty-six years, from 1873 to 1909, the system of International Uniform Lessons, in most of the North American Sunday-school field, held undisputed sway. A generation of Sunday-school superintendents arose who, whatever their other perplexities might be, never needed to give a thought to the problem of choosing lessons for their schools. They might pick one style of helps or another; but the Bible lessons presented in the helps were the same. Fifteen wise men, the International Lesson Committee, did the selecting; and that settled it for many million users. Lesson-choosing for the Sunday school was in danger of becoming one more of the lost arts.

Then came the International Graded Lessons. Of course there had been other lesson propositions before, notably the Blakeslee Lessons; and several of the religious bodies, disregarding the Uniform Lesson selections, issued courses of their own. But in 1909 superintendents began to receive from their own denominational houses announcements

of graded as well as uniform lesson helps; and ever since the problem has regularly confronted the would-be conservative leader: What lessons shall our Sunday school study next year?

There is no known way of dodging this issue. We might as well face it fairly and try to study the problem through. Watch the way in which teachers and pupils handle their lesson books and papers. Do they preserve them with care? Do they study and utilize them? How much of each week's lesson treatment does the average teacher follow and use? Is it not time to get the Sunday school out of its lesson ruts?

That large body of American Sunday-school workers who are not yet ready to give up a uniform lesson for all classes, and who therefore desire to continue using Uniform Lesson papers, denominational or independent, may well consider how much the world has learned since their favourite style of lesson was introduced. People who buy automobiles are watching for the announcements of next year's models. In household, farm and office conveniences the dealers tell us we should not try to get along with the old-fashioned, superseded kind: we shall lose money. How is it with Sunday-school lessons? What year's model is the uniform-lesson school using?

A hundred years ago, the Bible was studied in Sunday school in several ways. It was used as a reading book, with spelling and reading lessons for those who could not read, and with continuous reading, verse and verse about, for those who could. It was also (in 1829 and later) used as a

book of texts, one for each day's learning and the week's seven verses as the Sunday lesson. But the favourite method was memorizing; the aim being to commit and recite as many verses as possible, with tickets and rewards to stimulate quantity production, and with each pupil selecting what verses he pleased.

The first of these methods proved indirectly a great blessing. Out of it came the movement in England for what we call public schools, the organizing of the Bible Society, and the enlargement of the Sunday school to include classes for adults. In view of conditions then prevailing, it also brought blessing directly to thousands to whom otherwise the Bible would have been a sealed book. But as a whole these methods did not satisfy.

About 1820, therefore, American workers began to see that Bible teaching in Sunday school should be on the basis of a lesson passage, selected in advance rather than chosen by each pupil, limited to certain verses, usually ten to twenty, arranged in a series, and numbered for use on consecutive Sundays. Local trials of this method showed its value. It was first called " the selected lesson," then " the limited lesson." The first American limited lessons were issued by Truman Parmelee of Utica, N. Y., in 1823.

Rapid progress followed. The lesson questions were improved. The lessons were dated for simultaneous use by many Sunday schools on the same Sunday. In 1827 the American Sunday-school Union followed its earlier issues with a series of " Union Question Books " on its uniform limited

lesson lists, which became the standard helps in American Sunday schools for many years. About 1850 denominational series began to multiply. In the sixties was evolved the modern type of teacher's help on the limited Bible lesson. By 1870 at least four sets of limited lessons were in use in the United States, each uniform for all classes in the school.

In 1872 the limited lessons, without change of character, were made both uniform and International by the appointment of a central selecting committee; the four independent series being thus reduced to one. As the "International Uniform Lessons" we have been using these for over fifty years. We have improved them at many points. We have enlarged the chassis, strengthened the engine, re-shaped the hood and quite transformed the body. But the basic mechanism is still that of the little Parmelee car of 1823. Great car, that,—for 1823! No wonder some of us love it.

Other features beside size are limited in the limited lesson. The ten-verse units exclude as much good Bible material as they take in. We have to supplement and modify the method in order to reach what we want; and large Bible areas are neglected altogether. The method encourages uniformity in teaching for different ages; whereas in every other field of child-nurture we study adaptation to age and its needs. It makes no provision for any student's advance: he merely moves from one part of the Bible to another. It makes subject-matter central and soul-need incidental; whereas all modern education, religious or secular,

makes soul-need and life-need central and subject-matter incidental. And this subject-matter, even though thus made central, is not so presented as to be thoroughly and continuously learned.

To overcome these fatal limitations our Lesson Committee, from 1909 to 1915, issued the lesson-lists of its permanent "International Graded Lessons," now called "the closely graded lessons," with a separate and independent course for every age-year. Since 1918, also, its uniform selections have been for use only with pupils above the beginners' ages. From 1924 on the uniform selections span the diverse needs only of pupils of twelve and over. The beginners have the two-year graded course for children of four and five. For the primary classes the Committee has selected "group-graded lessons," in a three-year series, and for the juniors a like set of group-graded junior lessons. Intermediate and senior group-graded lessons are to follow in 1927.

The four lessons—soon to be six—thus chosen by the Lesson Committee for use on a given Sunday by Sunday schools not using the closely graded lessons, are independent of each other. Each is constructed as a course in its own way, in order to fit the needs of the ages that use it. The limited lesson method of Bible study is regularly used only in the uniform series; and this series is uniform only as to the middle and upper school. So the old "flivver" has been taken off the market!

Not quite, however. If you must drive the 1823 model, you may be able for some time to buy something that looks very like it. Lesson-helps

can still be had that undertake to furnish primary and junior classes with expositions based on the International uniform limited Bible lesson. But the Lesson Committee is not responsible for such an application of its selections. It is studying harder than ever to meet the needs and follow the thoughts of the older students for whom its uniform selections are chosen. Its lessons are therefore now far easier to teach to these older classes than they were when the Committee selected its passages and titles with a view to the needs of all these and the younger children too. This great advantage is enjoyed by every uniform-lesson Sunday school. There was no way to get this advantage except by sacrificing the 1823 type; and our Lesson Committee has been brave enough to do it. Let us fall in behind their leadership and stand by their lesson-making plans.

Before it is settled for any Sunday school what its next year's lessons are to be, the matter is surely worth an evening's full discussion in workers' conference. In any such discussion the superintendent should be ready to make clear the principles of lesson-making and lesson-using. What are lessons for? How and from what sources should lesson materials be chosen? How may lessons be most effectively used? The third of these questions will be considered in a later chapter; the second at the close of this chapter; the first now. Why is a Sunday-school lesson?

The word "lesson" is used in various senses. There is first a series of titles and assignments of Bible passages, sometimes with other material.

Then there is a printed help, or a pair of helps, one for the pupil and another for the teacher, based on these lesson specifications. Then there is a teaching plan, worked out by the teacher after studying the lesson help, and intended for use in a particular class on a given Sunday. Then there is the teacher's effort to follow this plan, mingled with the pupils' responses thereto; the result being often quite different from what was planned. Finally, there is the effect, whatever it be, on the lives and the personalities of the pupils, as a consequence of their having had that hour with the teacher and with each other. So, for each Sunday there will be a lesson of the Lesson Committee, a lesson of the lesson help, a lesson of the teacher's study, a lesson of the classroom, and a lesson of the pupils' lives. There is gain in bearing this distinction in mind.

Now if we ask, What is the teacher trying to do? we shall get many answers. But if we ask, What is most worth the teacher's doing? there can be but one. Each of these pupils is a personality. Each has a life to live. Together, they form a group which is a piece of human society and is related in many ways to the larger world and to the future. Jesus Christ is our perfect law of life. The fellowship he taught is our perfect law of social living. Whatever else the teacher may seek to do incidentally, his primary aim is to cause that these lives shall be formed on the model of Jesus, and that human society, so far as these pupils have to do with it, shall become the kingdom of God. Every other aim, however important we may have

counted it, has value in proportion as it helps us in attaining this end.

But is the end attainable? We teachers have had experience in trying to mould lives and regenerate society through lessons taught in Sunday school; and some of us frankly do not believe it can be done. Comparing our powers and the helps given us with the conditions of our task and the influences to be met and overcome, we ask, "What are these among so many?" We go on teaching; but our unbelief in the possibility of success leads us to adopt some lower aim. If we cannot mould character, we can at least teach the Bible. So we make Bible teaching our end; and teachers and lesson-makers prepare lessons accordingly, trying incidentally to "apply" the lessons, so that, in addition to being understood and remembered, they may also be of some value in upbuilding the pupils' lives.

Discouraged workers become mechanical. The teacher who has lost faith in the power of teaching may still use his Bible; but he will do so only as the lesson help specifies. The help itself he will use only in part; while his pupils will use their helps little or not at all. His school may utilize the helps as aids in worship. Those who issue the helps will naturally utilize them in rendering various services to the denomination. The Sunday-school movement, through its Lesson Committee, will continue its historic work of making the common lessons serve the cause of unity in the field. These by-products of lesson-making have great value. Good teaching of the Bible has still greater

value. But the winning of souls to the life of Jesus, and the training of individuals to live God's will on earth as it is lived in heaven, is the dominating value. Once we dare to set that as our aim, other aims become incidental, and by-products must take care of themselves or get out of the way.

The central message of this chapter is this: *It can be done!* Character grows through experience. The little child can learn only through his own experience; and for every age that is the best teacher. But through stories and other forms of presentation we can draw on the experience of others and help our pupils to live through it and make it their own. That vast treasury of experience we call the Bible is ours to use in leading our pupils to God and encouraging them to take him as their Father and Jesus Christ his Son as their Saviour. In all this God has his work to do, and we have ours. The child himself must live, act and grow; but we, through our lessons, may so stimulate and restrain, point out and inspire, that his growth shall be in the direction of the Christian ideal.

But we must have faith that this is God's work, and that in doing it we shall win. Every lesson must form part of our campaign. Every lesson must center around some experience of the pupils, as individuals or as a group living together. We are to help them interpret this experience. Our lessons must be such as will aid us in doing so; and we are to use them for this purpose. If they are Bible lessons, they can usually be adapted to this end. Our lesson is successfully taught when our

pupils have come to understand their experience, feel differently toward some things connected with it, and are moved to seek a higher and more satisfying experience, one with which Jesus would be better pleased.

Obviously, however, this is a work in which many must unite if resistance is to be overcome and the task carried to successful completion. If we see clearly what the work is for these particular pupils, we may be able not only to do our own part well but to aid in getting others to join us. The parents of these pupils should be led to see the vision too and to lend their aid. Pastor, fellow-teachers, and, if need be, superintendent are within reach of our calls for cooperation. If the lesson helps are not such as we need, it may be that others, of this or some other series, might help us more. If we can state what we need in our lesson book or paper that we do not find, we shall help ourselves, our fellow-users and the lesson editor by telling him what we want and why.

All parties, in the church and outside, agree that living by the example and teachings of Jesus is the way to save society. A part of society, in a highly formative state, is from time to time entrusted to the Sunday-school teacher. The Sunday-school lesson is, or should be, a wise and workable plan, with fit materials, for a day's work on the greatest task in the world.

The closely graded International lessons, as most of the denominations issue them, and also the independent graded courses, take their material in all ordinary cases from the Bible. But in the be-

ginners' and primary courses much material is taken from nature; and in the junior and intermediate courses there are stories and biographies of missionaries and Christian leaders of other than Bible days. Is it right to introduce these extra-Biblical lessons into the Sunday-school session?

The main reason why these biographical lessons have been introduced is that the good qualities of character need to be shown at work not only in Bible times but in every age, including our own. If we would teach that a man of today may and should have Abraham's faith and know the God of Moses, we must take men like Abraham and Moses and study them just as we study the men of the Bible—not for themselves but for the lessons their lives can teach us.

Some conscientious workers, zealous for the honour of the Bible, have objected to the graded lessons because of this extra-Biblical material they contain. Some denominations, in issuing their graded lesson books and papers, have replaced all or nearly all of this material with Biblical matter, sanctioned as alternative lessons by the Lesson Committee. In so doing they have substantially altered the educational plan of those who originally drafted these graded courses; though the text-books presenting this all-Biblical material are written and printed with the usual skill and care.

To help my fellow-lovers of the Bible to see this issue in what I believe to be its true light, I wrote, some years ago, this little story:[1]

[1] *The Graded Sunday-school Magazine*, April, 1916. Reprinted by permission.

A Study in Salesmanship

In the city of Philadelphia there was a business of large trade and high repute. The founder of this house had started the business in 1776. He had been a friend and associate of Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard. In his old age he had drawn up a set of business rules for the guidance of surviving partners. To this early and noteworthy start the firm had added a steady maintenance of its honourable traditions. The partners, at the time of which we write, believed that the house owed its success to its faithful observance of the rules laid down by its founder, and to the fact that he had been an associate of Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard.

The house, therefore, made much of its history. "Established 1776" was part of its trademark. Every new clerk and salesman was told of the firm's ancient greatness and instructed to make it prominent in his dealings with the public. The old salesmen had taken over from their predecessors a habit of always beginning a conversation with a prospective customer on the road by recounting the firm's history and mentioning the names of Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard. The idea had thus grown up in the force that the only way to make sales was by following this custom; and the partners shared this view.

One day, however, a new manager took charge of the selling force. He knew and respected the firm's history, and was determined to maintain,

and if possible increase, its already high standing. He was, moreover, a student of modern salesmanship. He believed that the true test of a salesman's worth to the house was not his eloquence as to Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard, but the number of orders he sent in and the feeling of the trade toward the house, as shown by the ability of the salesman to hold his customers from year to year against competition, without price-cutting or other inducements.

"What is this I hear?" asked the senior partner of the manager one day. "The salesmen, I learn, are talking our goods to the trade without laying emphasis on the firm's long and honourable history. They talk about matters that have nothing whatever to do with the goods, or with our firm. One of them spent half an hour in a customer's office the other day talking fancy chickens. What have chickens to do with our goods? The names of Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard were never once mentioned."

"Yes," observed the manager, "I know that customer. Fancy chickens are his hobby. He was so pleased with the interest our man took in the subject that he gave him a large order for our goods."

"That is not the point," replied the older man. "The salesman had no business to talk chickens when he was out to sell goods. There are plenty of other times when he can talk chickens; he can do that, if he likes, when he is in his sleeping car or at his hotel. When he goes into a man's office to sell him our goods he ought to talk about Ben-

jamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard, and the honourable history of our house."

"But the chicken talk sold the goods," said the manager.

"I don't believe it," replied the head of the firm. "I don't see how any good results can come through departure from the rules and traditions that have kept our house successful for a hundred and forty years. The man would have sold more goods if he had talked business in the right way, according to our rules. Why, if this thing is to be allowed to go on, in a few years the trade will forget that such men as Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard, and the founder of our house ever existed."

"Is he never to talk about anything but that?" asked the manager.

"Why, certainly," explained the other. "When he needs to use chickens as an illustration, he may introduce that topic or any other, incidentally. But that was not what this man did. He deliberately began with chickens, and talked chickens for a full half hour. There must be something the matter with that man's loyalty to our house, and to the memory of these great men. I object to any such disproportionate emphasis on outside things. What is a chicken—even a fancy chicken—compared with Benjamin Frank——"

"But," persisted the manager, "the customer was interested in chickens, and he didn't care a rap about the history of our house. Maybe he will some day, but he didn't then. If he ever does, it will be through buying and liking our goods.

Seems to me it's more important to sell our customers goods than to teach them about Benjamin Franklin and the rest; but even so, that man was right. The only possible way to get him over to us was first to go over to him. Now that salesman studied his customer. He found that the way to get this customer was to talk chickens. That's modern salesmanship. You've got to be all things to all men, that you may by all means sell goods. Benjamin Franklin said that, didn't he? Anyhow, it's so."

"Ah," said the head of the house, sadly, "that's the trouble with you salesmanship fellows. You are so interested in salesmanship that you overlook the honour of your house. Salesmanship is all very well in its proper place, but it must never be allowed to run away with the really important matters. There must be no trifling with the honour and dignity of our house."

"Why," remarked the manager, "that's just what I'm working for. I want to double our sales this year. I want to hold our trade and keep our customers from dropping away from us. I don't see any necessary antagonism between keeping up the honour of the house and making the business pay; do you?"

"Oh, no. But if our men really had in their hearts a proper sense of the honourable history of our house, they could not help talking about it. They would dwell on it in every conversation when they were selling goods."

"Have you inspected our sales records," asked the manager, "to see whether or not more goods

are being sold under the new plan than these same men succeeded in selling before?"

"I don't need to. The great end for which our men go forth is to maintain the high standing of this house; if they do that, the sales will take care of themselves. I believe in good salesmanship; and I expect our men to be good salesmen. But I am going to put a stop to all this introduction of extra-business material into the selling talk of our representatives."

The following week, therefore, a circular notice went out to all the firm's salesmen to this effect:

"While our house approves in general of modern methods of salesmanship, we nevertheless feel it necessary to insist that all our men on the road, in opening their business conversations with prospective customers, shall refrain from pursuing subjects of conversation not directly related to business, and shall invariably call the attention of the customer to the fact that our house was established in the year 1776, and that its distinguished founder was a business associate of Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, and Stephen Girard."

IX

GETTING TEACHERS

NORTH American Sunday schools now enroll over twenty million members. Notwithstanding splendid recent advances, all forms of Protestant weekday local religious instruction hardly yet enroll more than half a million. As to all but two and a half per cent of the Protestant population, therefore, it is the Sunday school which now and for some time to come must teach the children and youth religion.

For sixty years this institution, with the churches and overhead agencies which support and guide it, has been approaching an economic crisis. So silently and steadily has the situation developed that its meaning has not been perceived. With this crisis it is now high time that the churches began to reckon.

One common factor binds the Sunday schools together. Other factors rise and fall, dominate or disappear; this factor runs through. To get, to keep and to improve the teaching force is the superintendent's most puzzling problem.

It may be a little neighbourhood Sunday school, working alone in the rural community. It may be the school of a village or small-town church, loyally upholding its own denominational banner against the narrow sectarianism of those other

churches. It may be the average Sunday school of the city; or the church school educationally led, held to high standards by exceptional leadership; or the large-size city Sunday school, handling its thousand members as best it can; or the mission Sunday school for an exceptional or institutional membership. In every case, with the rarest exceptions, the report is the same. It is hard to get and keep teachers.

This shortage is felt even among those fair-to-middling teachers that most Sunday schools are glad to get and hold. As for teachers qualified, trained and ambitious to improve in teaching, the supply is far below even our present conscious wants. And while our standards are constantly rising and our wants increasing, the supply of such teachers is growing actually smaller year by year, with the increasing complexity and pressure of American life and the non-religious backgrounds of the oncoming generation.

When, in the year of grace 1886, I began my convention contacts with all sorts and conditions of Sunday schools, this situation existed. Nearly forty years before, the far-seeing secretary of the Methodist Sunday-school Union, Dr. D. P. Kidder, in his annual report, had voiced the need; twenty years before, that great constructive American Sunday-school leader, Dr. John H. Vincent, had broadly and energetically met it with his Sunday-school institute movement, out of which came the perfected type of Sunday-school lesson quarterly, the International machinery for the selection of uniform lessons, and Chautauqua.

Teacher-training, "normal work," as it used to be called, has thus been stressed with vigour for sixty years. Its results have indeed contributed materially to our Sunday-school resources. But it has not even kept pace with our needs, much less overtaken and supplied them. We have gone on, writing our books and holding our institutes and organizing our classes and raising our standards and launching our ambitious enterprises; and today the need for Sunday-school teachers is far worse than when Vincent faced it in 1865. Something fundamental is the matter. What can it be?

I think I know. There is one simple remedy for the whole situation. It is in fact so simple that to accept it hurts our pride. Its application also will require the sacrifice of a beautiful and highly cherished ideal. In consequence the whole Sunday-school world, with rare exceptions, has flatly refused so much as to consider its possibility. A few concessions to obvious needs have been hesitatingly made; but its thoroughgoing adoption is still in the class of wild, impracticable and morally questionable innovations.

Be it so. To be called a wild, impracticable and morally questionable innovator will not be a new experience for one who went through the fight for grading and graded lessons against the holy orthodoxy and eternal desirability of International lesson uniformity. He who will may see which way the world is moving. Some day, not many years hence, the thesis of this article will be a commonplace.

The way for the church to find, keep and better

the teaching force it needs is to pay money for the competent teaching of religion. Once it determines to do this, it may choose among many applicants, enforce its standards of qualification, fidelity and progress, solve in succession the many baffling problems of local religious education, and pass on to new fields.

To teach any Sunday-school class anywhere is a serious responsibility. To continue as a teacher for a year with even moderate effectiveness involves, beside the work of the teaching hour, careful weekly preparation, the leadership of through-the-week activities, attendance on official meetings, some incidental expenditure, and many sacrifices of personal and family convenience. Our present standards double these requirements by demanding also that each teacher shall specialize as a department worker, pursue a three-year training course, and as soon as possible graduate therefrom; with a call for continuous further reading and study. The standard is none too high. But why has it taken us sixty years to see that we are not making any headway whatever in our struggle to meet it? Absolutely, we have made many fine advances. Relatively to current realization of need, we are steadily losing ground.

For years, to be sure, we have had directors of religious education, paid and professionally trained, with here and there a specialist employed for the primary class, the children's division, the men's class or the young people. The vacation and weekday schools of religion also pay for much of their teaching, most of their management, and all

of their supervision. But these examples have so far had little effect on the status of the teaching force of the Sunday school. Even where there is a salaried director, he must somehow impart new efficiency to a corps of teachers and department principals who work only for love and annual recognition. No wonder the captious opponents of this unwonted expenditure sniff at the visible results and call the experiment a failure. We have expected bricks without straw. Our church schools cannot rise above the level of amateurism till we are ready to pay money for administration and for teaching too.

Three practical questions here arise. 1. How is the money to be raised for these salaries? 2. On what scale and by what plan are the salaries to be paid, so as to secure for the least money the greatest possible increase of efficiency? 3. In what way, through this plan, may we expect this greater efficiency to be caused?

1. Long since the leaders of religious education have demanded that each church adopt its Sunday school financially, by placing its entire expense on the annual congregational budget. Some slight progress has been made in bringing this to pass. If district superintendents and other church leaders were to throw their influence in its favour, its adoption might be considerably hastened. Where the church is poor, it is easy, as was shown in Chapter 5, to adjust offerings so that the school, without loss of educational interest in giving, may meet apportionments and carry local burdens that will offset the present educational outlay.

The first step, then, in the proposed reform will be to effect this financial arrangement. The second will be to convert the church to the support of an educational budget enlarged to include the salaries proposed. A church where this was tried reported, some years ago, that the fund for teachers' salaries was the easiest money of all to raise, the contributors paying it with enthusiasm. There are not many communities where the actual giving to boys and girls of a better religious education is not a salable proposition.

2. Experience alone can determine just how the salary schedule should be best arranged. The church referred to paid its teachers thirty dollars for a year of thirty-six Sundays, deducting one dollar for each Sunday's absence; this being paid to the substitute for the day. Each teacher was engaged for the year on a written contract. It was found that on this basis service could be had by the church that could not be purchased for many times the sum paid. And notwithstanding the teachers thus felt themselves, nearly as much as before, to be contributing their time and labour for the Lord's work, they now took their tasks with a new seriousness, as business obligations which they had bound themselves to fulfill.

Differences in the tasks of a modern church school will of course call for a graduated scale of payments. Each church adopting the principle of paid service will doubtless establish a minimum rate to cover ordinary Sunday-school teaching, with the preparation, visitation, leadership of activities and attendance on meetings incident

thereto, and will increase this for larger responsibilities and for the completion of training-course units. The rates must be high enough to be real, yet low enough to discourage mercenary service.

3. Thus interpreted, by an administration committed to the policy, and intelligently pursuing a definite aim, we may look for these results:

a. Attendance and workmanship placed on a professional footing.

b. The service given a markedly higher rating.

c. Ambition stimulated to show results.

d. Large increase in attendance on training classes, both by those accepted as teachers and those who hope to qualify as such.

e. Purchase and reading of more books on method.

f. Enlargement of current progress of weekday class activities.

g. Facilitation of parish educational unity, by enabling the church to secure one worker for several lines of work for the same group of children. A volunteer worker can find time and strength to run a junior department, a junior society, a junior mission band, or a junior choir, but seldom any two or more of these together; hence, largely, the unfortunate independence of these parallel lines of religious-educational effort.

h. Opening of the door for the church's advance into the field of weekday religious teaching, and also into its sorely needed service for the educational leadership of the homes.

Any church that has the courage to espouse this new policy, the Christian spirit to rise above per-

sonal issues in applying it, the wisdom to avoid mistakes and follies in detail, and the faith to persevere, will doubtless find that this enumeration falls short of the gains even of the first three years of its operation. Its ultimate value, as an answer to the discouraging setbacks of the present situation over the North American field, none can measure.

Lofty standards of teacher-training break down for lack of those willing to conform to them. In our joy at the hundreds who attend our training schools we forget or ignore the many thousands who stay at home. Our educational philosophers justly emphasize the weakness of a church divided against itself, with zealous leaders, guided from far-separated headquarters, competing for attention in the Sunday-school class, the young people's society, the mission bands and classes, and the scouts; but how the combination worker is to fight life's grim battle and volunteer this fourfold labour for the church besides, they do not discuss. Paid local service in religious education will meet the present-day situation. Nothing else will.

He who espouses this reform may count on vigorous heckling. Let us anticipate a few of the thrusts that are coming, and see how the reformer might honestly meet them.

1. "Free service has been the glory of the Sunday school."

Yes; and the incompetency of this free service has been its shame. When through a modest and reasonable set of payments the efficiency of the service has been fixed on a level nearer than now

to the average level of public-school teaching, the glory of the Sunday school will return.

2. "Many splendid teachers are willing to work without pay. Why waste the church's money by paying for what we can have for nothing?"

Of course we have splendid teachers now. Many of these will prefer to continue as honorary teachers, working freely; and there is no reason why they should not be accepted on this basis, if they will sign the teacher's contract with the others. For all who are paid, the gain in quality of work through the operation of new motives will be well worth the cost.

3. "Religion cannot be taught for money."

Neither can it be preached for money, or played, or sung. Whoever does these things with no motive for his task beyond earning his money does not belong in God's house at all. But there are few such. The church ordinarily pays just about enough to enable the minister or musician to live while he is giving to its service the requisite time, labour and heart. Thus sustained and encouraged, the worker gives himself unselfishly to his task. That is what we expect from this new class of full-paid or part-paid church workers.

4. "Our church cannot raise its budget now without having to meet an annual deficit. Would you bankrupt us?"

Early in the Great War, Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton said that Christianity was not a failure, because it had not yet been tried. To raise money for a church that is actually delivering religion to a community is not often tried. We expect that

the Sunday school whose teaching force is professionally efficient will actually build the Christian characters of its boys and girls. Give us the money we need to put our work on that basis, and the congregation and community thus served will see that the church has all it needs to keep such work going.

5. "The moment you make these teaching positions jobs, there will be an unseemly scramble to get them, with favouritism, politics, and all sorts of trouble."

In other words, the church referred to is religiously illiterate, so untaught in the mere rudiments of the religion of Jesus and Paul that it cannot safely take even this simple step in educational reform. Evidently, this church's present need is high-grade religious teaching, to raise its standards of social conduct. How can that be had without paying the price? As for the difficulty raised, the "scramble" is one of the assets of the plan. It enables the leaders to establish and enforce a standard of fitness and faithfulness; and if this results in a waiting-list of applicants, so much the better. "Favouritism" is to be met by employing a competent leader, giving him authority, and upholding his hands. The answer to "politics" is civil service reform. In some churches the need for better politics would not be created by paying the teachers; it would merely be freshly exposed.

The church of Christ in the United States and Canada has not yet realized that in its educational task it faces an economic situation. Thanks to the vigorous utterances of Coe, Athearn, Cope and

other prophets, it is beginning to realize the vastness of the responsibility laid upon it by the necessary present secularization of the public school. It must teach religion—not merely make a gesture in the direction of teaching religion—or it is doomed to see the childhood and youth of North America grow up godless and morally untrained, save in a utilitarian ethic motivated by patriotism. The intrinsic weakness of that dependence our educators and our churchmen unite to declare.

But the church is still trying to meet this tremendous challenge with voluntary service. The incapacities of that service are all in the record: he who cares for facts may read them in Volume I of the *Indiana Survey of Religious Education.* The International Council of Religious Education and the denominational agencies separately are launching brave plans of advance, implying still heavier drafts on the time and money of unpaid workers. Meanwhile in every sphere of life the pace has quickened; the fight for existence and material progress has grown more bitter; the margin available to men and women for such service as they are able to volunteer is more clearly needed for rest and recuperation. The church has a lesson to learn. Unless the local worker's task can be given an economic relation, current plans for advance in religious education are a mockery.

The first Sunday-school teachers were paid as a matter of course. Why should not the workman be worthy of his hire? The discovery that godly men and women would teach religion for love was in its day an unspeakable blessing. It opened the

way for all the long service of the Sunday school to religion, to civilization and to humanity. But a new age is upon us. We must bring back the vocation of religious teacher into the economic world from which it went so bravely forth nearly a century and a half ago. Give the Sunday-school teacher even a trifling chance to make his work count in the struggle for food, shelter, comforts and leisure, or for self-improvement in this his avocational profession, and he will serve with new zest, higher ideals, and a holier consecration to his teacher's task.

X

IMPROVING THE TEACHING

IT is sober truth to say that the Sunday-school superintendent's task is just one hard problem after another. In Chapter 9 we faced the ever-present problem of how to find the men and women needed as teachers and other workers in the Sunday school. Assuming now that the superintendent has secured an adequate number of these, we face the much more perplexing problem of how to get teachers to do successful teaching work.

A Sunday school is what its teachers make it, if its aim is to be really a school. Good teaching is far and away its greatest need. The superintendent as pilot may at various times steer for other landmarks; but every reach of the channel should be navigated with reference to the teaching goal. The teachers are there to teach. The officers, including the superintendent, are their servants to help them realize the church's purpose for its school.

But what is good teaching for the Sunday school? The superintendent or department principal, whose main work is to secure and supervise good Sunday-school teaching, ought to know it when he sees it and how to ask for it when he finds

it wanting. It is desirable, but not essential, that he shall himself be a good teacher. One may be a critic of painting or music without being an artist, but not without having clear notions of what art is and how artistic effects are produced, and a power of sympathetic appreciation. What constitutes good Sunday-school teaching?

As I recall the ideals of the hundreds of superintendents with whom I have mingled during my years of convention service, it seems to me that most of them were satisfied when their teachers could be depended on to reach this standard:

1. Be present regularly, sending a substitute when absent, so that the care of the class is fully carried.

2. Teach the class so quietly, and keep it so well in hand, that no adjoining class makes complaint.

3. Visit with fair regularity.

4. When the pupils reach a suitable age, see that they present themselves to the church authorities for confession of their faith in Christ.

An excellent standard, this, as far as it goes; would that all Sunday-school teachers were reaching it now! But as to the quality of the religious teaching being given, it says nothing, except as that may be measured by Items 2 and 4. Even these are not safe tests. The teacher may be keeping the class quiet with talk and stories that have no value for our work. Pupils may "come forward" for reasons quite other than a true Christian experience and decision, and may show by their later conduct how little they know of what

confessing Christ means. The standard needs a fifth item: *Every teacher must teach his class well.* And until there is a director of religious education to carry the responsibility, the superintendent must see that every class gets good teaching.

Forty years ago it was agreed in the standard books on the Sunday school,—Trumbull's *Teaching and Teachers,* for instance, and Gregory's *Seven Laws of Teaching*—that teaching means causing another to know. But since that day radio has come in, and the motion picture, and the automobile, and the electric light, and nearly all our telephone service. Along with these has come in a new education. Now, if you must be conservative, stick to your kerosene and gaslight and the old gray mare, but make room for this new education; for it means a new kind of human progress, and is as truly a servant of the kingdom of God as ever was the printing press or the science of medicine. Get your school in line for the transformation of the next generation, through the teaching of that religion and that kind of social living that Jesus Christ first taught the sons of men!

It is just as needful now as it was forty years ago that the teacher should cause his pupils to know. There is indeed now more by far to be known than there was then. But the teacher of today sees knowledge as a means, not an end. He thinks first of his pupils and the lives they are now living and are to live in days to come. His work is to help them to live and to grow.

The man who turns from his daily business to be superintendent of a Sunday school is liable to

think of each class as a block of humanity, assigned for the year to one of his teaching force, labeled as of a certain age-grade, and rated on a scale that runs from very satisfactory to very troublesome; much as he thinks of the various lots of merchandise on his shelves. Even this stage of educational thinking is not reached in an ungraded Sunday school. When therefore such a superintendent is compelled to deal with the amount and quality of a teacher's work, he first, as we have seen, measures the gross visible outcome, and then, as to detail, considers the amount of lesson material studied, with possibly an examination to show how many facts and words the pupils can recall. What else, he will say, is there to measure?

But we now realize that the class is not a block of humanity. Every child in it is a separate, free, self-active soul, living his own life and day by day undergoing experiences which write themselves in his memory and shape his character. He learns by living. The facts he learns and the words he memorizes do not constitute his education: his experiences do. And God has wisely and lovingly provided for him, in his "forgettory," an automatic run-off for all those facts and words which his teachers present to him, but which he has not succeeded in using as helps in the interpreting of some remembered experience.

We commonly say that the way children forget what is taught them is very discouraging. It is not half discouraging enough. It should block us entirely from the way we were going. We are here to serve these children's needs. God reveals to us

these needs, if we will hear. He speaks, not in our prayer-book, nor in the edicts of church councils, nor yet in the traditions of fifty Christian generations, but in the unconscious expressions of spiritual hunger and want that come unbidden from the child's innermost life. What a child forgets should be as significant to us as what he remembers; for by these indications we can see what parts of our instruction have failed to find connection with his experience, what items of his diet are spiritually indigestible.

Equally significant with children's failures to remember are their mistakes. When a child reproduces some verse or teaching incorrectly, his error may enable us to see how his mind has worked in this necessary process of translating our verbal wisdom into the language of his life. So much of this process is ordinarily hidden from our view that every such error is really a precious peep-hole into the child's mental workshop. We may also count it a mark against the teacher whose lesson was thus misunderstood.

When a child, for example, recites the beautiful text from Colossians (1:12), "Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us to be meat and potatoes to the saints in light," what a rebuke he administers to the dull folly that thinks to honour God and benefit souls by laboriously drilling children on what is to them only sonorous nonsense, except as they catch in it some association with things familiar! In this case, while the primary teacher was thus engaged, one alert child caught from the strange words an association with one of

his most satisfying recollections. "Meat and potatoes" he fully understood; and he recognized the combination as a blessing for which we should give thanks to the Father. That lesson the teacher had already taught him. Possibly he took the text, as thus translated, to mean that we ought in return to be just such a blessing as meat and potatoes to "the saints in light," whoever they might be. If so, then this pupil succeeded, by means of the very error at which we ignorantly smile, in gaining from his golden text a ray of gospel light on his daily experience. Every plate of Irish stew he eats will henceforth remind him of his duty as a child of God. Exactly that—to illuminate experience—is what all our Bible lessons are for.

Or take another authentic instance of a child's error, this time that of a junior boy who lived near a canal that bordered the banks of a turbulent river. Asked to repeat the Twenty-third Psalm, he said, in the second verse, "He leadeth me beside the tow-path." When the words "still waters" were taught him, he reached back into his remembered experiences to find something that they would fit. At once he thought of the contrast between the rapids of the river and the calm waters along which ran the tow-path, his familiar thoroughfare. No doubt he loved to watch the mirroring of the willows and the reflected silver and gold of the sunset. In his life that tow-path was the shrine of the beautiful: under its spell he could dare his loftiest dreams. We are sure at least that the scene had made on his heart a deep impression; for though the Bible words were sim-

ple and easy to remember, they were for the moment effaced by the stronger image which they recalled. And because he now knew that he and the Bible writer shared a common experience, the Bible was to him a book more vital, and his daily trudge along the tow-path a privilege more divine.

All education, including religious education, should be organized around the experience of the child to be taught. From that experience it must start; and with some phase of that experience every lesson must make full contact. The general aim of all religious teaching should be so to direct and enrich the pupil's experience that he may himself move onward, by successive choices of good and refusals of evil, in the direction of the highest ideal we know, the teachings and personality of Jesus our Lord.

What then becomes of the old saw, "Experience is a dear school, but fools will learn in no other"? If experience is the only teacher, then, it seems, we are all fools. Fortunately for our self-complacency, this is a fallacy, based like most fallacies upon the double meaning or application of a word. Experience is indeed a dear school; as many a man of wasted life has found. But others by the million have passed this way before. The wise man uses the experiences of others to illuminate and determine his own. Only those experiences that in some aspect parallel our own have to us an educational value. But, on the other hand, every experience of another being, in this or any age or sphere of existence, is of value as teaching material, if it can be used to stimulate the

pupil, first to imagine himself passing through a like experience, and then to seek such an experience if it is good or shun it if it is evil.

In the light of these thoughts we can see, more clearly perhaps than heretofore, what our Sunday-school lessons are for, what teachers are for, and what constitutes good and successful teaching. Every lesson that is what it ought to be is a piece of experience, taken from some field of life that lies alongside the pupil's own pathway. Its use is to help the pupil to see more clearly the pitfalls, hazards and dead ends of that pathway, to broaden his horizon, to introduce him to fellow-travelers, past and present, whom he should know, to help him forecast his route, determine his goals and choose the best among his alternatives, and above all to secure his love to God and personal loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Such work as this has been done in Sunday school, many a time. We did not call it by scientific names; but we did it, as God showed us how. We often did it in spite of the kind of lessons given us to teach, and the absence of grading, and the poor seats, and the disorder, and our own deep ignorance of Bible material and teaching methods. Love found a way. The time has now come for the leader of the Sunday school to know what is meant by good religious teaching, to organize his school so as to make such teaching easy rather than difficult to secure, to offer to his teachers and teachers-to-be the means of improvement through training courses and contact with leaders, and to make the school itself so religious a society

that its members will have, under his leadership, weekly practice in the life that our Saviour showed us how to live together.

But we still lack a definite answer to the question implied in our chapter-title. How shall the superintendent go to work to improve the quality of his teachers' teaching? Evidently this is no easy task; nor need we look for any simple method. But neither need we despair. An ordinary lay superintendent may, by using every influence within his control, build up in an average Sunday school a force of teachers who will teach their pupils steadily, earnestly and well. Recapitulating from this and earlier chapters, and adding suggestions from modern industry, here are the main planks of a platform on which a Sunday-school leader may hope to win:

1. Join the teachers as a fellow-learner. Some of their most inveterate mental habits will have to be unlearned and new ways substituted. This will hurt them. Is the leader willing to be hurt in the same way? Will he say, "I think I know, but I may be wrong: I am ready to learn"? No one can teach pupils who is not a willing pupil himself; and the teacher of the teachers must be the most teachable of them all.

2. Establish conditions that make for continuous and satisfying service. Every teacher must feel that his work is something he cannot afford to drop or neglect. Henry Ford scandalized industrial society some years ago by making five dollars a day the minimum wage in his shop for unskilled

labour; and he has since raised it to six. Results show that he never did a wiser thing. Make it worth while to be a teacher in your Sunday school. If that means paying money for service, pay it, though nobody in all the county or the denomination ever heard of such a thing before. Cut the labour turnover. You cannot afford to be training a procession that comes in today and drops out in six months. Along with the pay, or the immaterial reward if you can invent one, must go the leader's freedom to "hire and fire" at will, on the record of efficiency shown.

3. In filling vacancies in the force, do not confine attention to the applicants. Search the community for the right man or woman. When found, seek to make it worth that particular worker's while to come in. When possible, promote from some lower position. Overcome reluctance by enlisting the interest of the class: let them do the urging. A really efficient Sunday-school faculty is built up steadily; the choosing and getting of each member being a separate problem.

4. Draft a written standard of performance for all teachers. Have this after discussion adopted by the monthly workers' conference as reasonable and to be observed. Embody the terms in the items of the school's weekly records, and see that these are regularly and fully posted by the secretary and reported to the workers' conference. This lifts all judgments on teachers, as to this standard, out of the realm of the personal and subjective. If Miss A is not taking proper interest

in her class and its work, the report, not the superintendent, tells the story and suggests what must be done. From time to time this standard will be raised: the school's ideals as well as its numbers should grow.

5. Facilitate the teachers' educational growth. Provision for this will include a teachers' library, regularly increased and diligently circulated; stimulating practical discussions at the monthly workers' conferences, on papers prepared by the workers in turn; unfailing representation of the school at all available conventions, institutes and rallies of Sunday-school workers; responsibility of department principals for the progress of their subordinate teachers; and either in the school itself, the community adjacent or some reachable city center a training class or school, with every possible teacher and principal enrolled and studying unless excused for cause fully shown. The school will of course pay all fees and carfares, the teachers contributing the much more valuable time required for attendance and lesson preparation. All applicants for teacher-places will be expected to take any such courses as are open and appropriate; and if accepted as applicants on the school's waiting-list their expenses should similarly be paid.

6. Provide conditions favourable to good teaching and class leadership. This of course includes the standard modern housing and equipment for departments and classes, with adequate and undisturbed teaching time. It also includes a church attitude favourable to the modern policy of pupil-management, pupil-initiative and week-long pro-

gram. The modern teacher cannot succeed if he is expected to be only a teacher of Sunday-school lessons, and to live with his class for only the weekly Sunday-school hour. The principles of religious teaching already discussed make that clear. And without success he will not be satisfied with his task and its compensations: for no matter how many dollars a year the church may pay him, the love and enthusiasm of his pupils will pay him more.

7. Expect from each department principal careful supervision of the work of her class teachers. She must find ways of learning what sort of work they are doing, how the pupils are responding, and what results in conduct and character are beginning to appear. Supervision does not imply criticism or interference. It is rather a sympathetic appreciation of what the worker is trying to do, and an effort to aid him in doing it better.

8. With these conditions duly provided, the leader is in position to apply to every teacher that great stimulus of all human endeavour, appreciation. He knows what constitutes real religious teaching and how to recognize it as wheat amid the chaff and straw that ordinarily passes for teaching in the Sunday school. With the help of the pastor and those in touch with the homes, he may check his observations by listening for echoes of his school's work in the daily lives of the children; and in his own school and the schools and shops of the community he may follow the expanding lives of the older pupils and watch his teachers' teaching as it matures in life.

When the teachers discover that their superintendent judges their work fairly and sympathetically, that he is quick to see and praise excellence in service, that he knows real teaching and is interested in nothing else, that he prizes zeal and originality above conformity to orders and rules, even his own, if better results are gained thereby, and that good work gets from him ample recognition and adequate support, the standard of service in that Sunday school will rise, and the children and youth it nurtures will honour their leaders and bless the church that resolved, whatever the cost, to give them a livable religious education.

XI

AN EFFICIENT STAFF

THE chart of our Sunday school's ship-channel is now fairly clear. The lower reaches have been covered. We have passed one landmark after another, each by some navigators counted the main goal, only to see a new and more significant reach opening before us. The last three chapters have seen us up the long reach of lessons and teaching. Now we are well on our way to port. What next?

Well, if lesson-choosing is so complex a problem, and if teacher-getting requires the Sunday school to come to its church with so novel and upsetting a proposal, and if the teaching process is so rare and fine an art, as these three chapters have declared, evidently the Sunday school needs a higher type of leadership than it is getting now. The old-line superintendent is not the man to steer the ship up that channel. It must have a trained educational administrator at the helm.

And yet—surely experience with the old ship counts for something. The young graduate in religious education, with his psychology and his academic degree, has still many lessons to learn that a wise old navigator could teach him. There is considerable human nature lying around, even in a fully graded Sunday school; and some freshly

shipped pilots have been known to touch it off unexpectedly and with unfortunate results. Why might not the two officers work as partners together? And if it is idle to expect that such a pilot can be shipped this year, or soon, why should not the captain bravely go forward himself, studying his charts with new diligence and understanding, and resolved that neither by negligence nor by refusal to learn new lessons will he suffer his ship to miss the true channel and waste time through grounding and delay?

The Sunday-school leader needs not and should never try to do all the leading himself. Every Sunday school has in its membership far more leadership power than is usually drawn on. By counting the stated monthly workers' conference a necessity and organizing it for mutual fellowship, conference, self-improvement and decision of vital issues, the superintendent transfers to his colleagues part of his load of responsibility, gets from their criticisms and suggestions a useful check on his own judgment, and establishes a training-school of leadership as part of his school of religion. By welcoming the modern policy of pupil-management in the young people's division he not only makes their life in the school far more interesting and educational but gains for the school new leadership service. By properly organizing the departments under their respective principals he distributes the leadership of the lessons and the teaching. By syndicating his own leadership functions among a staff of general officers he frees himself from rou-

tine and becomes a leader indeed. And that brings us to the problem of this chapter.

First let us consider the fundamental attitude to be taken toward this general-officer service. What is its relation to the work of the Sunday school as a whole?

Down from those times, still dimly remembered, when a dollar and a half would buy a day's unskilled labour—a ten-hour day at that—comes this old anecdote:

"Mike, me boy," chuckled Pat, "Oi've the greatest joke in the world to tell yez. Oi'm gettin' a dollar an' a half a day fer doin' nothin' at all!"

"How's thot?" queried Mike.

"Why, all the boss axes me to do is jist to carry bricks in a hod up the ladder. The man at the top does all the work."

Don't call that a joke. It's a hero-story.

Why did Pat take that view? Because his heart was in the job. So noble to him seemed the enterprise of building that house that the heavy bricks on his shoulder were forgotten; and his humble service seemed as nothing in comparison with that of him whose skill could actually make the walls to grow. Could every artisan and every employer so lose himself in the greatness of the common task, and the consideration due the toiling, managing and contributing partners, the industrial millennium would be here indeed.

The Sunday school being a school, whose first, last and only work is education, and the doers of this being the teachers and the head teachers, it follows that the officers, as distinct from the teach-

ing force, stand to those engaged in the real task as does the hod-carrier to the mason or bricklayer who lays up the wall. In finding and training his officers, the wise superintendent will seek to bring every member of his force to Pat's point of view. "We are the helpers: the teachers do the work," should be the officers' slogan, the superintendent leading off.

If therefore it is not what the Sunday-school officer does, but rather what he assists others to do, that fixes his efficiency rating, it follows that the relationship of each officer must at the outset be clearly established, so that all may know where to look for signs that he is doing well or ill. Some of the worst obstacles to good teaching I have ever seen have been produced by the attitude of some splendidly enthusiastic superintendent or secretary or chorister who has thought of his service as a thing in itself and has failed to study his function as a helper to every class and teacher.

Not all officers directly serve the teachers in their teaching. Some assist other officers. Some aid the teachers in work other than teaching. Some divide with the head servant the general ministry to the school. We must also distinguish between officers and offices; for so can we frame a sliding scale applicable to a Sunday school of any size. In the large school every office will have its separate officer, and he will have assistants holding places further subdivided; while in the little Sunday school two, three or many offices will be filled by the same individual. But the chart of offices and their connecting relationships will be

the same for all; and it will aid the combination functionary of the small school to realize just what separate and separable tasks he is responsible for.

This carrying of several offices by one person needs to be watched. Even in the little Sunday school it often needlessly hinders good work. It feels so good to be in charge of nearly everything that the composite worker is reluctant to divest himself of any one of his customary functions. In this he is encouraged by the others, especially the young people. These politely accept the situation, continue in office the man who is doing it all, and find no occasion for showing what they themselves could do. How natural then for this much-put-upon man to stagger on under his load of divisible detail, declaring that nobody else will do anything, and that it is a choice between him and nobody! But an analysis of the needed official functions of a Sunday school, applied to a particular field, will usually show several, now united, that could with profit be separated and placed in new hands. The leader is thus left free to organize progress, while each distributed function becomes to its recipient a stimulus and a lesson.

Another weakness widely prevalent is the officer's engrossment in inherited routine. Hymns are sung because—why, because we have always sung them. The idea of using a hymn to reach a particular result has not dawned on such a leader. All through the work of many secretaries and treasurers are features that never would be there if service had been the only formative consideration. Why is this? Partly because it has been the

business of no one in particular to call the official to account by demanding of him the specific assistance for which his office ought to stand. Our hod-carrier friend has the remedy for this trouble. The wall's the thing. What difference does it make how the bricks are carried up the ladder, so the master bricklayer is enabled to do his work with greatest efficiency and least loss of time?

Ready-made efficiency charts of official Sunday-school functioning are sometimes illuminating and useful to the local leader. But the best analysis is that which the leader makes for himself. Taking as a guiding hint this idea of responsibility, here are a few suggestions to help the superintendent think through the problem of official service for his school:

First comes the pastor. Then, if the church has one, is the director of religious education. Both these have a wider field than that of the Sunday school, and a higher rank than that of the superintendent, its immediate official head. All three are responsible to the church, first for getting together and understanding each other, and then for a combined leadership that can show results.

When officers, teachers and class presidents assemble in the monthly workers' conference, the body so formed needs service. Its leader will be the director or the superintendent, as may be arranged. The leader, having provided the program and drafted the docket of business, will do his leading from the floor, the pastor or a church official presiding. The conference will elect from its number a clerk—not the school secretary—and a

treasurer; and the latter will thus become the treasurer of the Sunday school. These are not the usual arrangements; but they open the way for better service to the body concerned.

Besides the service rendered in their respective divisions and departments by the principals of the graded teaching forces and their respective staffs, service must be rendered to the school as a whole. As the superintendent is responsible to the church and to his force for the efficiency of this general service, those who render it must be directly responsible to him. A secretary is needed for records, reports and supplies, a chorister for the leadership of music, a librarian to handle the permanent book supply, and one or more associates to share the tasks of session supervision. Each of these in turn must be duly assisted; and all actual service will wherever possible be performed by pupils working under official direction until able to carry responsibility alone.

Whether from among the pupils or from those outside, the efficient officer will find, train and inspire his needed assistants. Without good help of his own choosing he cannot render standard service. Every officer, therefore, must by the rules of the school be empowered to nominate his assistant or assistants for the year. The church will thus choose its Sunday-school superintendent; the superintendent will choose the members of his staff, the secretary, the chorister, the librarian and the associate or associates; the chorister will choose his pianist, and so on. If the present rules provide differently, they must be amended to give this

principle free play. But inasmuch as all these officers are to be in close contact with the teachers and classes during the year, and as personal relations when unacceptable are usually ineffective, all such nominations should be reported to the workers' conference for approval or dissent. Here again custom must not be permitted to bar efficiency's way. The school's by-laws are its arteries; they should not be allowed to harden.

Every Sunday-school officer works for pay. The higher the pay, the better, as a rule, he will work. The innovation of paying for Sunday-school service in money, discussed in Chapter 9 with reference to the teaching force, applies equally well to the officers, so far as these are looked to for extensive, continuous and technically trained service. Much of the official service of the ordinary Sunday school is not yet of this sort and may well be continued on a voluntary basis. When a paid service is needed, the church and the school should be ready to meet the situation. But spiritual pay will for some time to come be the force with which the superintendent must command his officers' diligence and skill.

For this reason the Sunday-school superintendent has a more delicate labour problem than the factory manager and needs a higher grade of executive ability. How comparatively simple a task it would be to summon teaching and official help from church and community, and to maintain standards of efficiency in service, if wages in money were in his hands to pay! Yet even with this strong motive in his hands, the manager some-

times fails; and without it, many a superintendent has notably succeeded. Make each task worth a particular worker's while, and he will take hold and stick to his post.

The usual premium for the acceptance of an office is a vision of the significance and influence of the service to be rendered. The wages that keep the worker steady are the interest he takes in the task as his own. The union rate that every good officer insists on getting is freedom from interference and full initiative within his jurisdiction. The bonus that spurs him to unusual exertion is hearty recognition of the part he is playing in the school's success and progress. And if the school is really a school of Christ, and its religion is in its life as well as in its lessons, every officer will measure his official greatness by the extent to which he succeeds in becoming " servant of all."

XII

THE COOPERATION OF PARENTS

"ONE good turn deserves another."

That is to say, when a man has done me a favour once, I expect him to do it again. If he is kind enough to keep up his favours until I become used to receiving them, and then cuts them down or stops altogether, I feel aggrieved. What have I done to deserve this?

When the favours are dispensed by an organization, any slight sense of personal gratitude I may have had disappears. Firmly continuing my claims, I watch to see that the stream of good things flows on unabated, and that no one else gets more than I do. "If there is anything going," I remark to the family, "we might as well get it as anyone else."

When the church, through its Sunday school, is the dispenser of educational favours to the homes inside and outside its membership, these interesting developments of religiously uneducated human nature find frequent expression. The sacrificial cost of the service is taken for granted. The parents' conduct plainly speaks their mind. "What is the Sunday school for," they say, "but to teach our children religion? Why else do we give ourselves the trouble to send them? The church has been doing this for other homes all

these years: now it is our home's turn, as long as we find it convenient to get the children off to Sunday school."

Department-store adoption of the maxim, "The customer is always right," has added of late to the problems of the progressive Sunday-school leader. Trade finds that this policy in the long run pays, however just may be the salesman's side of a particular issue. Parents, accustomed to carrying their point with the store manager, do not see why they should submit to Sunday-school regulations that call for specific meal-hours, interfere with week-end expeditions, put their darlings into classes other than those the children themselves prefer, and then, just when all is going so well, announce their promotion to a different department and a new teacher. It was not so in the good old Sunday school, and they will not stand it!

Over against this attitude, held by some homes, is the attitude of cordial appreciation and desire to cooperate shown by others. The superintendent must be ready for both. He needs the cooperation of all the homes. Some need merely to be told what is desired: others must be visited, studied, invited to meetings and exhibits, solicited for contributions that will make them feel the weight of the Sunday-school load, and otherwise dealt with until the spiritual pauperism from which they now suffer has been overcome and their interest enlisted in the common service. The treatment must fit the individual case. If there were no other reason why the superintendent should insist on an official staff

to carry his administrative routine, the need for his leadership in the school's work to secure home cooperation would be enough.

The leader who succeeds in converting, interesting, educating and enlisting as allies the home forces of his field will do more for the religious education of the childhood and youth of that field through the influence of these homes than through all his other resources put together. But he must have a program. When he can show, clearly and convincingly, what he and his Sunday school are doing and planning to do, he has some chance of winning for his program the parents' approval and support. And when he has gained this support he can put through his present program and plan a more extensive program to follow.

In seeking for home cooperation, the natural place for the superintendent to begin will be with those features of the school's life with which he as leader has most to do. First of course will come regular and punctual attendance. Devices for giving the pupil a motive for this are numerous and familiar. But in spite of contests and Christmas rewards and " star class " honours and yearly pin schemes and other superficial, not to say quackish treatments, the average of American Sunday-school attendance records is shamefully low. Even where genuine interest in lessons and the work of class and department has been secured, so that pupils are absent or tardy with sorrow, much of both absence and tardiness continues, because the children cannot control the life and standards of the home.

This is not true of the same children's public

school attendance. Why the difference? Oh, the home takes the public school seriously. Our task, then, is to cause it to take the Sunday school seriously also. When we begin paying real money for Sunday-school teaching service and demanding a corresponding level of professional efficiency in every teacher, we shall have taken a long step toward convincing the homes that religious education is a real and a vitally essential part of education in general. But we need not wait for that revolution. A judicious imitation of some of the public school's methods, besides being of use in detail, may aid in getting the parents over into the desired state of mind. If every teacher is required to send home, each month, by the hand of each pupil, his monthly report-card for signature and return, the instinctive reaction will help, whether lessons and deportment gain anything or not. An earnest letter to parents, explaining what the school is seeking to accomplish and calling for a few definite acts of cooperation, will aid in making this reaction intelligent and cordial.

Beyond the features of Sunday-school life that fall directly within the leader's jurisdiction are those in which the department principal is concerned. In a church school properly correlated, this includes the society and club activities of the pupils of department age. Whether in charge of one worker or several, the work for junior children, as for those of every other age-group, should have its clearly formulated home side, to be placed in charge of the parents through visits, form letters and other definite means of contact, and record

kept of the extent to which each home does its assigned part in the departmental program. The superintendent may or may not participate in the formulation of this departmental call; but he should at least see that such a call is made.

Back of the department, again, is the class teacher. Any teacher may fairly be asked by the superintendent, "As a teacher, working with your class, what are you trying to do?" Unless there has been study of the teaching process in training class or workers' conference, the answer is likely to be vague and general; and the question will need to be pressed until the educational objective of the teacher is clearly revealed. Then should come the second question: "What part of this program are you assigning to the parents and the influences of the home, and what are you doing to get this part of your program carried out?" Such a conception of educational responsibility as was set forth in Chapter 10 can hardly even be worked on, much less achieved, by an hour's effort in Sunday school each week, unsupported by the collaboration of fellow-workers, of whom the parents should be chief.

But the teachers should not be left to seek this cooperation alone. Pastor, adult class, home department, woman's club, and every other available missionary agency should be moved to do what they can for the establishment in the homes of the church and the community of worthy educational and religious-educational ideals. The Sunday school, organized as it is for purely educational service, and binding into one body, even without

the modern inclusions and correlations of societies and clubs and bands, leaders representing every age from the babies to the grandfathers, has a chance to make itself a propaganda agency for the ideals it is itself striving to realize. The more these are accepted by its sister forces in the community, the better its own outlook for successful service. Without seeking to interfere with these, therefore, the superintendent may properly call on them to join the Sunday school in the task of making every home at least a cooperating school of religion.

As was noted in Chapter 8, the Sunday school has usually aimed first of all to teach the Bible. Noting what their children were studying, parents may well have thought of the Sunday school as a Bible school only; and where they have not themselves prized the Bible, or given it large place in their home life, their interest in the children's faithfulness as pupils has naturally been small. Now the modern graded Sunday school is a Bible school not less but much more than formerly, for it now covers far more Bible material in its lessons and presents this Bible material in a far more intelligent and connected way. And while there are many homes that neglect the Bible, there are not many that will dispute the proposition that a thorough Bible education is a good thing. By the better teaching methods of today, with results publicly exhibited, home interest can be greatly stirred and cooperation elicited. A good follow-up for a successful exhibit of Bible work would be a state-

ment, in printed form, of the graded course of Bible study pursued by the school.

But, as Chapter 8 also showed, Bible knowledge, for all its value, is but a means. The end is the lives of the children. To turn their hearts to Jesus, to form their characters on the model of his perfect life, and to train them in the art of social living, is the great task of the school of religion. It is easy and cheap to avow this as our aim: to make every lesson truly a lesson in religion, to fit the lessons to each child's personal need, and to keep each class moving onward through a genuinely life-building curriculum, is the highest task in all education, that of the father and mother alone excepted. But the work can be done. Some precious pieces of it have been done many a time, especially in the better type of beginners' and primary departments. When parents begin to feel in their little ones' home life, and in the wider life of their older children, tangible results from this kind of teaching, the school that supplies it may have anything it wants.

Suppose the superintendent, following the hints of this chapter, leads his Sunday school, his church and his community in a successful effort to win from the homes full cooperation in the work of the Sunday school. It will be a long and wearing campaign; but suppose he finds himself the victor at last. The immediate gain will be larger results in the Sunday school through the better backing now given to the work from the homes. This alone will make the work well worth while. What else will happen?

A good Sunday school is a great school of religion. But compared with a good home its influence is feeble indeed. In the building of character the home is the decisive power, for good or ill. If the Sunday school, the department, and the class teacher each need a program of effort for their work of religious education, the home needs it too; not such a mere program of cooperation as we have been discussing, but its own plan for training each child in the higher and nobler life to which Christ calls. If we could get each home to adopt such a program, what a service that would be!

It is a delicate matter to propose to a father and mother any plan for their dealing with their own children. "A man's house is his castle," in matters of nurture as of property and law. Plans for organizing departments for teaching the parents their duty are many; but successful work along such lines is not very common, except where the parents seek the help of themselves. But to ask the parents to cooperate with our work in the Sunday school is always in order. It is not a reflection, but a compliment, to imply that they are able to give us help. Here then is our open door to the family castle. The home, however irreligious and worldly-minded heretofore, that can be brought to take up definite religious work for the sake of the Sunday school, is on its way to realizing that it has a greater and holier work to do of its own. To win such a home over to such a work is the most far-reaching evangelism that the superintendent or any other Christian worker can undertake.

XIII

THE WORSHIP

HOW in the light of modern ways and ideas the Sunday-school leader is to reconstruct his former plans for the "opening and closing exercises" was discussed in Chapter IV. There we saw why separate assemblies for worship and desk instruction are needed in every department where separation is architecturally possible, and why, if adolescent pupils are to benefit from this part of their religious instruction, they must themselves have a part in leading it and in preparing its material. We noted, however, that much of the old-time main-room assembly work is still going on, and that such work has its own educational values, not to be forgotten. It may be that he who reads this still feels called on to run his Sunday-school session in the old way, at least until he sees more clearly than now how to do it better. But he would be glad of help.

Not much help is usually available. The pastor is in most cases a wise adviser and a willing assistant; but his compelling duties do not always permit him to attend the session. Printed orders of service, furnished with the lesson helps, sometimes fit the need, and sometimes they seem wooden and dry. It is easy to go by custom and old rule, following the order used by the former leader, with here and there an innovation of one's own.

If the Sunday-school pilot is steering for that good old landmark, a bright, interesting service in which all heartily join, here are a few suggestions that may aid him in keeping a steady helm:

1. Limit the worship period. Ordinary adult Christians cannot "practise the presence of God" for more than half an hour or so at a time: then mind and heart wander to other fields. Children cannot be held on the worship-level with adults for more than ten minutes at most. Fix therefore a definite period of worship in the Sunday-school session. The natural time for this will be the opening minutes. At the end of this period let down the tension, proceeding by means of a hymn to a period of desk instruction, and from that to the class lesson period. All of this, of course, will be worship in a secondary sense.

2. Lead up to this worship period by careful control of the preceding assembly period, when the school is gathering. Fix the precise minute before the "zero hour" when supplies must have been distributed, and when each officer and teacher must be in his place. Enlist enthusiasm, drill on details, insist on routine until it becomes habit; and the trouble will be largely over. A soft musical prelude effectively brings the assembly period to a close.

3. Protect the worship atmosphere, by stationing pupils as doorkeepers, outside and inside, to hold all late-comers until the worship period is over, and by insisting that the secretary and other functionaries refrain from crossing the room or in

any way marring the common attitude of reverent worship.

4. Exclude teaching from this period. Our aim is now to aid each worshiper to come into the direct presence of God and to think only of him, and of what we owe him. If the leader gives a direction, beats time, makes an explanation, or utters a rebuke, or if the pianist plays over the music of the hymn, attention is distracted from God to the school, the leader, the words or the tune, and worship ceases until the thread can be picked up again. The whole service should be as far as possible automatic. Its items must all be familiar, and the order must be followed from week to week with changes in detail only once a quarter or other like interval.

5. Give each service a definite emotional aim. In their class lessons the pupils learn to think and remember, where here they learn to feel. In his "Manual for Training in Worship," Professor Hartshorne sets as the five general aims of Sunday-school worship the virtues of gratitude, goodwill or love, reverence, faith and loyalty. The quarter's order of service may set for itself one of these aims, the leader varying some of the items each Sunday so as to develop some special aspect of the general theme.

6. In the brief and simple service that fills the worship period, not only should the items each be familiar, except the one or two that are varied each week to bring out the special thought of the day in connection with the quarter's aim, but the sequence of items should be so arranged as to lead

the feelings of the worshipers up to a climax. The Scriptural call to worship, bringing all to their feet with an appropriate response, may be followed with the Doxology or a hymn-verse sung unannounced. From this beginning the service will proceed, each item being an advance in earnestness on that which went before, until in the closing short prayer the leader tries to utter the gratitude or love or reverence that the school is feeling. Then, in the carefully selected hymn that brings the period to a close, this emotional state falls back to the general attitude of respect and willingness to learn that should characterize the session.

7. In the desk lesson period that naturally follows this period of worship, the superintendent, after seeing in an orderly and reverent way to the marking of class records, gathering of offerings and presentation of both by class secretaries to the school or room secretary at the desk, may briefly emphasize whatever lesson or motive he has selected as appropriate for this Sunday, and may take time to drill the school on some worship-item that is to form part of next quarter's service.

So much for the technique of leadership in Sunday-school worship, where the superintendent of the Sunday school does the leading and the assembly includes children. But what of the modern call for graded worship in departmental assemblies? Ought the superintendent to continue for one needless week to run the school in the old mass-assembly way?

At least half the Sunday schools of this continent still meet in one or at most two rooms. That ar-

chitectural fact fully warrants us in providing for the old type of service all the help it needs,—of which the foregoing hints are a very slim section. But it does not bar such schools from enjoying, when they are ready, the benefits of graded worship as carried on in the most modern of our city schools. The little school, with its family atmosphere, may use its one room departmentally just as the family uses its bathtub and its hammock and other privileges—by taking turns.

In such a Sunday school, on the first Sunday of the month all may worship with the primary class, next Sunday with the juniors, and so on; the school dividing itself for this purpose into four platoons, and the odd Sunday of the quarter being used for the quarterly festival. Where the true family spirit prevails, the little Sunday school is or may become as effective a school of Christian living as the best-graded city church school could possibly be. The fact that it generally fails to reach high standards of character-building performance is not chargeable either to architecture or to numbers.

This same plan of sympathetically taking turns in the leadership of the worship may be applied in every case where two or more departments or large classes must share the same room. Where the Christian spirit prevails, each ready to consider others before himself, it is easy for one group to throw itself for the time into the attitude and mood of another of different age and outlook, and to get real good from participation in the service. Where objection is made and disputes ensue, the need of lessons in social religion is clearly shown. Just

this practice in forbearance and sympathy may be the very training these pupils need; and it may appear that their teachers have need of such lessons also.

Widely current statistics of "spiritual illiteracy" reckon twenty-four hours a year as the American Protestant child's maximum opportunity for religious instruction. It is significant to note how this estimate is reached. The session is an hour long. Forty-eight Sundays make a year, allowing for festivals and omitted sessions. The session-time available for class instruction averages half an hour. True so far: but what about the other half-hour? Oh, that is taken up with "exercises"! Yes; and in the ordinary Sunday school these are just about as valuable for soul-culture as gymnastic exercises would be for body-culture, if the trainer did the exercising while his class looked on.

The challenge of these statistics is clear. To dispute the careful and competent surveys detailed in the first volume of the *Indiana Survey of Religious Education* is hardly possible. But the superintendent has it in his power, for his own field, to change the conditions on which those findings were based. Not twenty-four but forty-eight hours a year should be the allowance of graded religious instruction for every Sunday-school pupil; half of this in class, with a trained and steady teacher and a graded course of lessons and activities, half in educational worship and desk instruction, graded to the group's capacity and needs, and to the utmost possible extent made their own. To this goal

should the leader of the Sunday school move forward. Every week's avoidable delay is a lost educational opportunity.

The problem of training the Sunday school through the experience of Christian worship to know and love God, as part of its members' education in religion, cannot be solved in the Sunday-school sessions alone. There indeed may the worship-lessons be adapted to particular group-needs and related to the school's course of study. But none of these special worship-experiences can take the place of the lessons to be learned in the pulpit services of the congregation. Not for the sake of the pastor or the church, but for the sake of the children; not for the sake of their future loyalty but because they need it now, children should go to church, and the Sunday school, as part of its training in worship, should effectively encourage them to do so.

As for the little children, their church attendance is the parents' concern. The Sunday school's program under this head begins with the juniors. If well carried out, the traditional benefits to be gained by bringing children to church are safely provided for, with much besides; so that there is no valid objection on this score to the increasing use of the church worship hour for the cradle roll class, the beginners', and even the primary class sessions, if such arrangements are otherwise found desirable. The juniors are sometimes excused with their teachers just before the sermon; and sometimes they have their own "junior church," under the pastor's lead, at another hour. Both these

plans are of doubtful value, as compared with wisely managed junior church attendance for the full time. The older pupils should attend the church services as a matter of course; and the junior years provide the time for training them to do so.

The work of accomplishing this falls into three parts. The first of these rests with the junior department session, the second with the junior leaders and the parents in church, the third with the pastor. If the first and second parts are supplied, the third may be counted on to help, even where the pastor is not much of a children's man.

In the desk instruction period of the junior department's weekly service, two minutes are set apart for training in church attendance and attention, as part of the department's habit-forming program. Each teacher, on call from the desk, asks and records for each pupil the fact of church attendance since the last weekly session. This record forms part of the pupil's monthly and quarterly report. Then the question is put, "What do you remember about the service?" Brisk emulation follows between members of a class, and between classes, as to what can be recalled. These are some of the points that juniors can be trained to note and report on:

Who was the preacher?

What hymns were sung? What other special features?

What Scripture was read? (This correlates with the department's drills in the names and contents of the books of the Bible.)

Did the pupil take part fully in the responsive reading?

What proper names were in the Scripture lessons?

What was the text, and where found?

What did the minister say?

In one department where this was regularly done, the increase from week to week in what the pupils could recall was amazing, as was the extent of what they brought in about the sermon. The effect on the preacher was equally marked. When he realized how these children were hanging on his words, he began to preach to them as never before; and his congregation enjoyed and followed his sermons more than ever. The children's attitude toward the church service was steadily improved. Going to church was now an interesting experience, for there they had a work to do. No more of inattention or disorder during prayer or sermon: they were too eager to find material for their class reports. The general educational value of such an early training in the following of sermons and lectures makes such an exercise of great value, apart from the worth of the messages and devotions listened to. And while these incidental gains are being gathered, the formation of the habit of free, self-directed church attendance goes on. Juniors thus trained will in adolescence continue, because they have learned how to follow and enjoy the worship of the God of truth.

But children nine, ten and eleven years of age need much managing. They must be provided for as they enter the church door, or they will not

come. The department already referred to first did what it could to encourage children of church-going parents to come regularly to the family pew; and then, for the others, it secured for its use a block of sittings and announced that one of the junior leaders would sit there at every church service and invited all the children not otherwise seated to sit with her. This became a privilege much sought after. Other attractions, such as a special hymn or reading, to be carried by the junior children, may once a month, by grace of the pastor, be added to the department's plan.

With this junior link well forged, and the system kept up from one generation of children to another, the educational and cultural values of the church worship services are annexed to the Sunday school's curriculum of religious education.

XIV

EVANGELISM

HOWEVER high its score on every other point in the standard of methods, the Christian Sunday school that does not win and train its members as pledged and dependable followers of Jesus Christ is a failure. So, undoubtedly, all superintendents will agree.

Evangelism, therefore, is the great and fundamental task of every Sunday school that acknowledges Jesus as Lord. All other work, of whatever kind, counts as Sunday-school work in proportion as it contributes to the performance of this master-task.

To acknowledge this is one thing. To lead one's school, year after year, in consistent, all-around evangelistic activity, that actually wins to the Master's service all but the exceptional and transient membership of the school, and sends them forth to do high things for his name's sake, is another. Evidently it will be needful for the leader to consider how far his own soul has received and made its own the evangel he would bring to his company. Evangelistic methods, also, must be studied to see how far the response to them corresponds to what the New Testament indicates the true " fruits of the Spirit " to be. Perhaps some of the work done every Sunday is evangelistic without our realizing

it as such. Do we not, under this much-discussed topic, need to think over the meanings of the words we use, the distinctions we draw, the mental associations we have encouraged, and the ends we have sought? What indeed is evangelism?

In different minds the word raises a strangely diverse set of associations. The conservative churchman is apt to react against it. To him it suggests neglect of catechetical instruction and reliance on superficial responses to emotional appeals. But he whose Christian activity has been with the rescue mission, the "live-wire" men's Bible class, or the series of intensive meetings in church or community, counts nothing evangelism that does not lead to present repentance, conversion and entrance on a new life. Zeal for evangelism, as he understands that word, is the touchstone of Christian sincerity. The modern Sunday school is often weak on its evangelistic side, where it needs to be strongest, just because these two representative types of Christian worker do not sufficiently recognize and respect each other.

We need no new definition of evangelism. Evangelism is the work of presenting Jesus Christ to individuals and communities and securing their acceptance of full salvation in him. It was that in the days of John the Baptist and Peter and Stephen and Philip and Paul. The New Testament is the story of first-century evangelism. That story includes fiery sermons by the Jordan, quiet talks by lake shore and mountainside and riverbank, searching personal interviews on housetop and well-curb and rattling chariot, a landslide re-

vival in the temple court, a thunderclap before the Damascus gate, hot campaigns in wicked cities, the writing of letters and books of Christian instruction, Bible stories by a godly mother's knee. All this and far more was evangelism then: why should we narrow the word's application in this later and larger day? What we need in Sunday-school work is a new realization of the need for evangelistic effort, a new zeal in gospel service, and a new sympathy with types of evangelism other than our own.

Dwight L. Moody was the great evangelist of the last generation. His years of marvelous soul-winning power on the platform were bounded by his earlier years in Illinois, when he worked with B. F. Jacobs, William Reynolds and the other pioneers of mission school and Sunday-school convention effort, and the later years when he gave homestead and life to the great schools of Northfield and the student conferences that annually gather there. Without book-culture himself, except in the Book of books, Mr. Moody was an evangelistic educator. The center of his tabernacle campaigns was not the platform but the inquiry room, with its confident meeting of personal problems and individual needs. He was a catechist no less than a preacher.

A definite process of education is presupposed and foreshadowed in every well-arranged evangelistic campaign. The series of revival sermons is itself a curriculum, arranged in advancing order, and graded to fit different ages and groups. The appeals for repentance hark back to Sunday-school teachings and pastor's words and mother's old

Bible; and where this groundwork of lower-grade instruction is lacking the response is slow. The converts are called on for expressive activity; and plans are made for promoting them as soon as possible to full church membership. The spiritual life of the church is renovated, vitalized and deepened, both for present service and as a permanent school of religion for Christians old and new.

On the other hand the program of the modern church school includes home department, cradle roll and beginners' class work, to establish home religious influences, plant seed-thoughts of God, duty and the loving Saviour of men, and in many other ways lay the foundations of future evangelistic appeal if such shall ever become necessary. Its primary course fixes right attitudes toward the Bible, temperance, missions, the church, and Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Saviour. Its junior department is a training-school in the habits of Christian living; and its lesson-course includes all the great Bible narratives, much Bible memorizing, Christian hymns and drilling in the names and contents of the Bible books. Evangelists declare that their concern is for permanent results rather than for statistics of many conversions. How could such an evangelist wish a better preparatory course than that with which the graded Sunday school supplies him?

With the intermediate and senior pupils, ranging in age from twelve to seventeen and eighteen, the graded Sunday school includes in its teaching much that closely parallels the contents of the best evangelistic preaching. Before the intermediates

it sets the lives and characters of the heroes and heroines of Bible and Christian history and of missionary and social service. In this gallery of personal ideals Jesus Christ is the central study, and the living of his gospel is the anticipated outcome. Seniors, continuing their Biblical and biographical studies, discuss also the meaning of the call to confession of Christ and Christian living, the significance to them of the Bible and the church, the leading personal and social problems that confront the young Christian, and the factors involved in a Christian choice of one's life-work.

In connection with this progressive course of Christian studies, the classes and departments are constantly engaged in activities which give outlet to the impulses of the lessons, train in social living according to Jesus' laws of life, and lead to a more and more significant, permanent and far-reaching Christian decision. Not once but successively, according to his years, his outlook and his experience, is the pupil called on to "stand up for Jesus." And that he may "fulfill all righteousness," find his place in the organized fellowship of believers and become an increasingly efficient church member and worker, the modern no less than the old-line Sunday school is concerned that every one of its pupils shall at a fit time make public confession of his faith and take his place as a communicant church member.

The evangelistic campaign ordinarily starts with sermons to deepen the spiritual life of believers, quicken their realization of God's presence, power and claims, and bring them in penitence, gratitude

and faith to an attitude of reconsecration. Exactly this is the aim of the modern Sunday school's program of worship discussed in the preceding chapter. The material and method, of course, are adapted to the needs of childhood and youth; but the purpose is essentially evangelistic. There is indeed a far closer kinship between worship and evangelism than we ordinarily perceive. If each does not partake of the spirit of the other, faith in the sincerity of either quickly falls away.

How shallow and untenable, then, is the antithesis that is sometimes attempted between education and evangelism! Christian education and Christian evangelism are two phases of the same thing. Some educators are weak on the evangelistic side, and some evangelists on the educational side. Each has need of the viewpoints and the skills of the other. The modern graded church school, as it seeks to realize its proper ideals, is an extended and systematized work of evangelism. The evangelistic campaign is a plan of intensive, short-course religious education. Short-course instruction for adult students is a power in the educational world. In Christian activities we need it not less but far more. But its application should be confined to the cases where it fits the need.

Some graded Sunday-school leaders have not made the evangelistic purpose the central feature of their program. They have failed to teach God's love in Christ as the hope of man's redemption and to challenge their pupils to definite acceptance of Jesus as Lord. Some evangelists have slighted the value of that early religious nurture and continu-

ous Bible instruction whose results they are so glad to use; and in their laudable anxiety that the children shall share with the older attendants the blessings of salvation and a new life they have ignored the laws of child-nature and done sad and sometimes irreparable violence to the delicate texture of childhood's faith, sincerity and understanding. Which of these two tragedies is the more terrible it would be hard to say. The wise superintendent and the faithful pastor will unite to guard their flock from the approach of either evil.

Summing up the essentials of a Sunday-school evangelistic program, to be covered not in three weeks but in from twelve to twenty years, we may state them thus:

1. Foundation concepts and attitudes as to God, our fellow-man, the world of nature, human society and revealed truth.

2. Personal fellowship with Jesus Christ, enthusiasm for him as Leader, growing loyalty to him and his cause.

3. Frank, willing and progressive public confession as follower of Jesus and committal to his service for life.

4. Obedience to the precepts of Jesus, with growing acceptance of his social program, "the kingdom of God."

5. Relations of fraternal service with other real followers of Jesus; practice in acts and projects of united Christian service.

6. Mystic union with Christ as Lord; aspiration toward likeness to him.

7. Clear thought and conviction as to the

nature of Christ and the philosophy of redemption.

When every evangelist is an educator, and every educator an evangelist, and every pastor a teacher, and every church an academy, and every home a school, and Christ is in the midst of all, we may expect the blessing of God alike upon our extended evangelistic graded courses and our brief and foreshortened mass-effect educational appeals.

XV

REACHING PORT

IF the superintendent were navigating a ship up the channel, he would know the name of the port for which it was bound and the place where it was due to berth or anchor. Can he speak as definitely for his Sunday school? If his full ideal were realized, and his school actually accomplished all he ever hoped for, what sort of work would it do?

Now that is not an easy question. It is not one that any two superintendents would be likely to answer in the same way. It is not a question that one person can profitably answer for another. As in every other sphere of human action, each leader must work out his own ideal.

Nevertheless, every superintendent ought to have some ideal; and the friends of the Sunday school should share it with him. Every builder has his blue-prints. Every captain knows his port. Without trying to make for the superintendent his ideal, we may profitably consider what its leading characteristics should be.

The superintendent's ideal should be *high,* as noble and ambitious as it is in his heart to conceive; *clear,* a definite result that could be stated in detail; *comprehensive* of the subordinate ideals of each department and line of effort; *reachable*

by the united efforts of all his fellow-workers; and above all *useful* to those for whose education he is responsible.

The first of these five tests of a worthy Sunday-school ideal insures that it will be a Christian school. Its lessons—which include its own life and character as a group of workers—will center around Jesus Christ and embody his blessed gospel of love, forgiveness, holiness and service to God and man. Humanity knows no nobler ideal. Could any other excellence—energy, for instance, or vast numbers, or perfection of educational technique—be ranked higher by anyone calling himself a follower of Jesus? We agree, then, on the first specification.

As for the second, we all know how hard it is to think analytically, and how natural it is, when pressed with such a question as, "What is your school for?" to take refuge in some piously expressed generality. To say that a school's ideal is that all the pupils shall be brought to Christ fails to explain many activities now going on, has but a remote application to some of the members, and does not follow the example of Jesus. He too had a school; but his aim did not stop with making men his disciples. None of our customary statements of the Sunday-school ideal will stand the test of clearness.

The third requirement makes this weakness still plainer. Superintendent, pastor, primary teacher and other leaders often think of the Sunday school in terms of that part in which they have been wont to labour, forgetting, or failing duly to

consider, other groups and functions equally necessary to success as a whole. This lack of sympathy can easily be corrected by conference and the sharing of problems and burdens; and it should be, lest it lead to cross-purposes and division. The superintendent's heart, at any rate, will have room for the problems, needs and aims of all.

The fourth requirement limits the ideal to what could actually be done if all in the local field—teachers, officers, parents, pupils and congregation—were to work wisely and heartily on the common plan, and if the community forces and the overhead leaders, supervisors and purveyors of lesson-helps and other supplies were to cooperate as much as and as helpfully as this school could possibly influence them to do. Within that limit the leader is responsible for reaching his ideal. Beyond it he may dream, and his dreams may have value; but they will not be directly related to this year's work.

The fifth requirement rules out all plans and choices of method and material that are either handed down from the past or imposed by authority, except as they are found to fit the children's need; also all that are selected mainly because of the leader's or the workers' personal desires. *The need of the pupil is the law of the school.* Custom and authority, indeed, do not impose method without reason. The presumption is that the school's overhead leadership is right. When the leader is overruled, responsibility for results passes from him to the authority that over-

ruled him. He however continues responsible for his influence, so far as he is free to vote, plead and agitate for what he counts a better way.

It follows also from this fifth item that the true Sunday-school ideal must be one that can be at least partially attained this year. It is perfectly allowable to construct an ideal of the Sunday school as it shall be five years hence, when the new building is ready, or the training of teachers and candidates shall be complete, or control can be had of work in a certain department, where So-and-so, the impossible, now reigns supreme. But the child of five will then be ten, the boy of fifteen a youth of twenty, and so on. Never again will this Sunday school have the opportunity for training lives for Jesus that it has this year. Whatever our ideal, it must be one that conforms to Paul's doctrine of the acceptable time and the day of salvation.

Religion is the master-study in education, because it gives values to all else in life. It teaches us what to want, what to shun, what to do, whom to love, whose will to live by, whose ideals to pattern from. The school that teaches religion is the head school of the educational community. There may be two schools, one in a fine, well-planned school building, with a well-trained and well-paid faculty teaching the children twenty-five hours a week, and another in a made-over set of church rooms, where a band of workers with little or no professional training snatch time from bread-winning and home-making to teach those children, for no salary at all, one hour a week. But if the

latter school is actually teaching religion while the former is not, its precedence in the ultimate value of results, and consequently in educational rank, will be conceded by most thoughtful educators, apart from any claims that the church may file.

But does this particular Sunday school teach religion? Does it teach enough religion to fill for every pupil the need left by the incompleteness of state education? Before the superintendent dare "lay this flattering unction" to his soul, he must face that question. If not, then there is a vacant seat at the head of his community's educational table waiting for his Sunday school. Let it aim to qualify for its appointed position.

Before the place is taken, radical changes of some sort will probably occur. Courage is needed to face these cheerfully, going out to meet them rather than resignedly letting them have their way. The Sunday school may be shown to fail because it needs more hours of teaching time. Then we must have a weekday school of religion. It may be there should be closer unity among the Protestant churches of the community, to make possible an educational efficiency beyond the reach of separate church action. If sacrifice of cherished particularities is the price of a higher life for the children, a church of Jesus Christ will soon see what to do.

Some day we shall have new, deeper, truer definitions for both education and religion. Around our new conceptions new associations and new attitudes will grow. When that day comes, religion will come back to the schools of the people and

take its rightful place as the foundation of all studies, the inseparable factor in every course, on every subject, for every grade.

We are not ready now for that to happen. The people think of education as putting knowledge into children, and of religion as ritual, polity, company and creed. There can be no peace in a free land unless that kind of religion stays out of that kind of public education. For all the years of waiting until on this great issue we see eye to eye, the Sunday school faces its mighty need and its glorious opportunity. What shall be its ideal?

And as a contribution toward the realizing of that ideal, let the Sunday-school pilot who has received this book's message ask himself these further questions: What shall my Sunday school accomplish this year for the building of character after the likeness of Christ? And how ready am I to use to that end the means that the progress of educational science and the newer experience of my fellow-workers has put in my hands?

THE END

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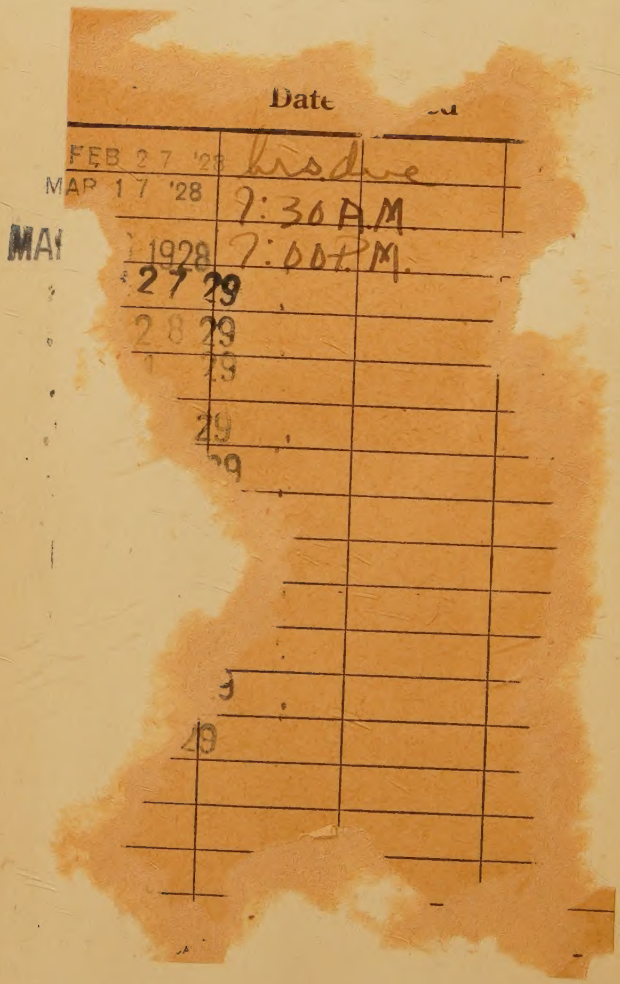
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